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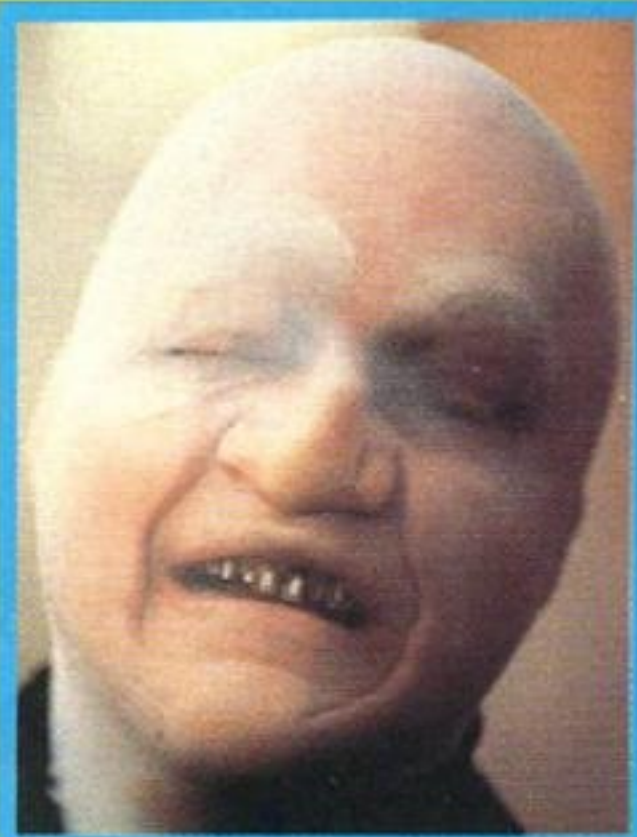
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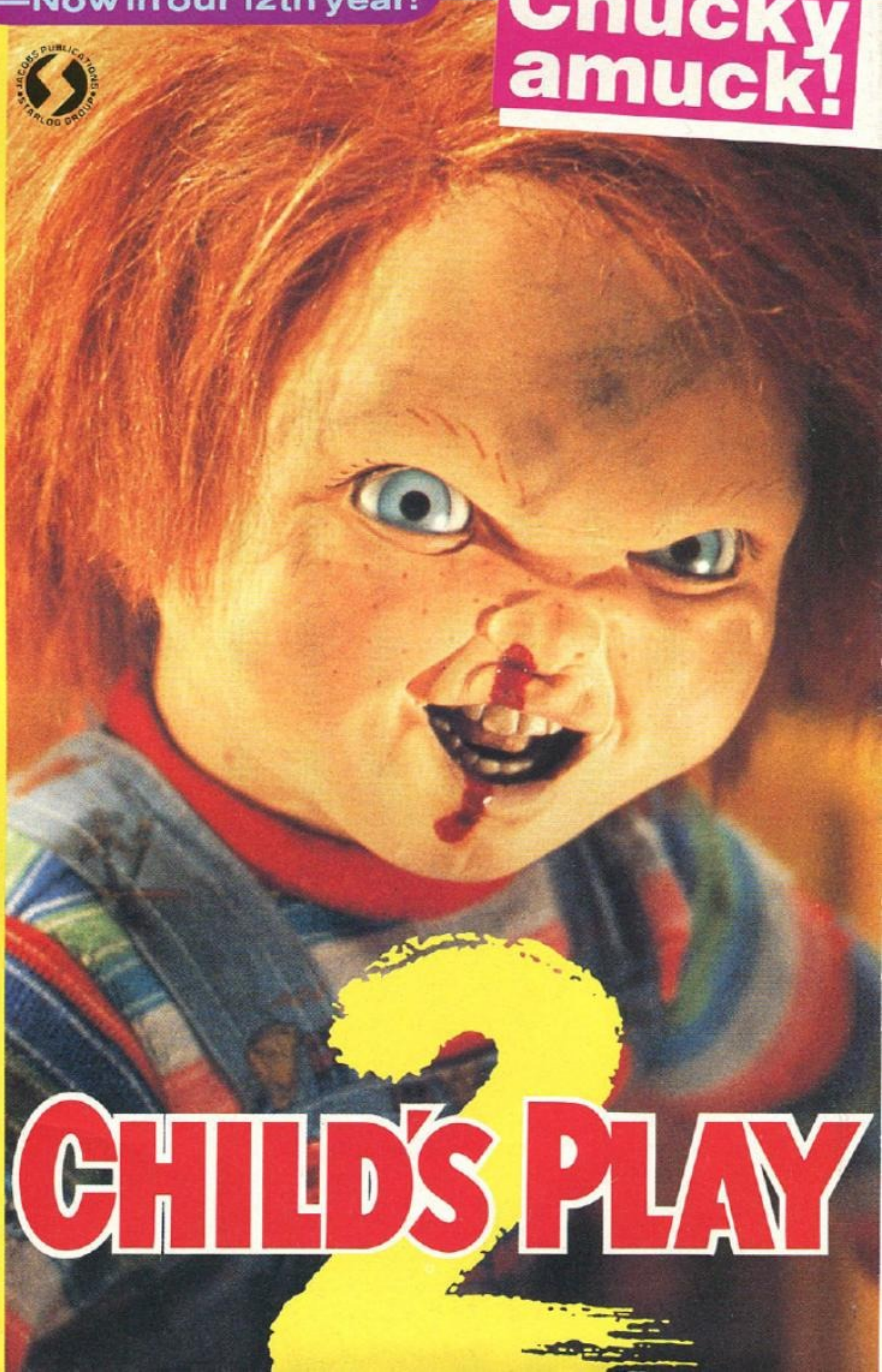
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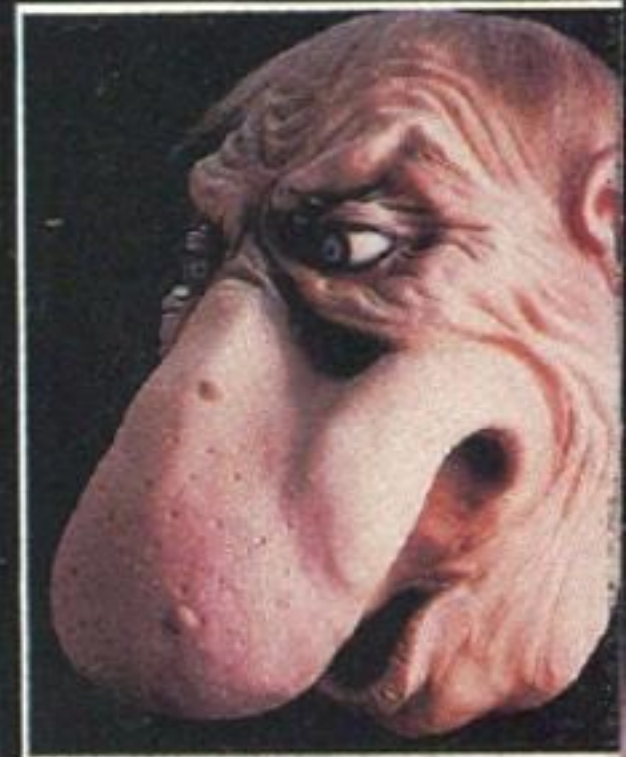
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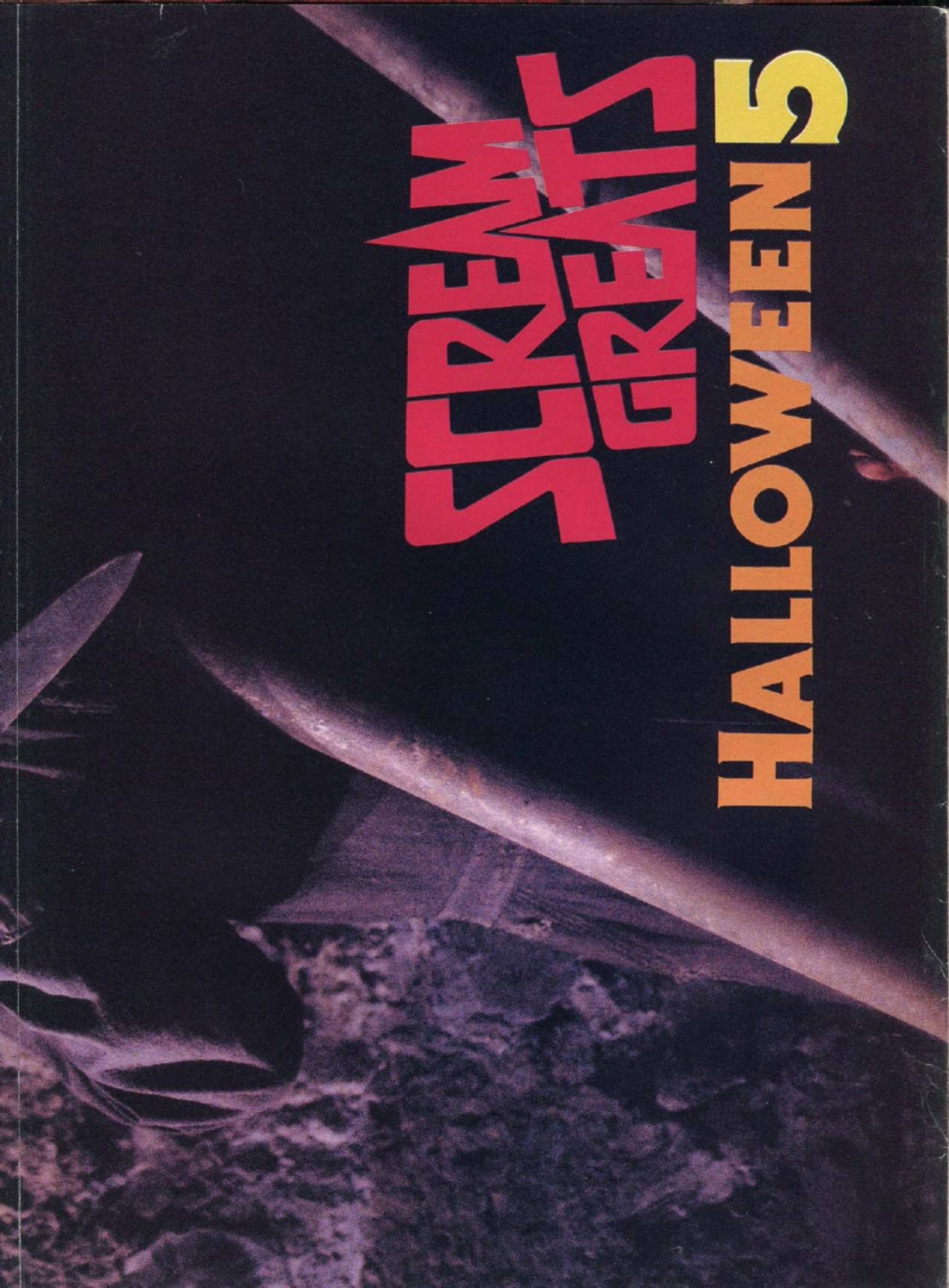
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SCREAM 5

HALLOWEEN

FANGORIA®

Nov. 1990

GUTS

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- 20 **THE BLAIR FACTS** The "Exorcist" girl sends up her most famous role with "Repossessed."
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- 28 **"NIGHT" WATCHMAN** Tom Savini trades his makeup kit for a director's chair to guide the Living Dead.
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Dedicated to Linda Blair

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ELEGY

Adult Horrors

Horror made a solid comeback at the nation's movie screens last summer. As I write this, five genre films have made the box office top 10 for the weekend of August 24-26. *Darkman* opened at #1, grossing over \$8 million in its first three days and validating (hopefully) all the hype we've been giving it in these pages. The wonderful supernatural romance *Ghost* continued to do strong business, while the preppie nightmare flick *Flatliners* held the #3 spot. *The Exorcist III* fell to #6 after a first-place opening the week before, and the very dark fairy tale *The Witches* took the #10 spot.

As noted last issue, 1990 has not seen any good balls-to-the-wall horror films generating blockbuster numbers. But the strong openings for *Darkman*, *Exorcist III* and *Flatliners*, and the amazing receipts for *Ghost*, indicate, at the very least, that audiences still have a strong interest in the supernatural, the unusual and more mature genre fare.

This fall, I want to be scared again. It's time for fright films that stimulate the intellect (like the stylish *Flatliners*), move the emotions (like *Ghost*) and most of all, make you jump out of your seat. Sure, the spider opus *Arachnophobia* was slick and entertaining, but did it have to be so safe, nice and middle-of-the-road? And wouldn't *Darkman* have been better if it had tried to be a combination of a couple of genres (say a film noir romantic tragedy) instead of a random jumble of six different elements? Let's see something that we can really sink our teeth into. There's certainly a lot on the new menu.

A few brand names head the list of fall/winter frights. Tom Savini's highly-anticipated *Night of the Living Dead* remake needs to be nothing less than magnificent for us to forget Romero's trilogy, so it will be best enjoyed if we leave our expectations at home and forget that the other *Dead* movies ever existed. On the other hand, as with most sequels, I have no strong expectations for *Child's Play 2*, since I'm not the biggest fan of the original. Perhaps I'll be pleasantly surprised. And inspired by the ultimate brand name, Stephen King, come three separate projects with the best-selling author's stamp on them. It has been six years since the last King screen glut; time for Hollywood to give it another shot, right? The first one out of the gate, *Graveyard Shift*, must do for rats what *Arachnophobia* failed to do for spiders. Underneath *Misery*'s big budget, star power (James Caan as Paul Sheldon) and critically acclaimed/award-winning director and writer team-up (Rob Reiner and William Goldman) is one very nasty, mean-spirited source novel. Will it survive the transition to the screen without being diluted by major studio compromises? The advance word on *Misery* has emerged as very positive, so there's hope. The miniseries *It* faces the even greater challenge of combatting ABC's no-nonsense Standards and Practices censors.

The one upcoming fear film garnering the best word of mouth thus far is *Jacob's Ladder* (see page 24), the saga of a Vietnam vet haunted by demons and horrifying visions. Instead of stealing from the genre for his best scares like he did with *Fatal Attraction*, director Adrian Lyne has reportedly made a movie that will terrify and disturb audiences from beginning to end. It has the earmarks of the kind of hit the genre needs to elevate itself above *The Guardian* and other recent disappointments, chiefly a well-regarded script by *Ghost*'s Bruce Joel Rubin and believable characters. And, no bones about it, *Jacob's Ladder* is a horror film. Really.

—Anthony Timpone,
Editor

The Postal Zone

Max KNB EFX Thanx

...I would like to thank Howard Berger for all the questions he answered for me at Fango's Boston convention. He was amazingly polite and patient.

As soon as I walked into the lobby Saturday morning, I could not believe he was sitting there all by himself. My friend and I immediately introduced ourselves. He was very kind in giving us advice and answering all our questions. I talked with him again later, after his stage appearance, and I only wish I could have stayed until Sunday to see his slide presentation.

Ryan Felix
654 Bee Street
Meriden, CT 06450

RoboFans

...I just got back from seeing *RoboCop 2*, and I was pretty impressed. Rob Bottin is an FX wizard. Not until I read *FANGORIA* #95 did I learn that the dismantled Robo, with eyes rolling and the whole nine yards, was entirely puppeteered. I figured it was done with the standard camera tricks used in decapitated head scenes. The stop-motion photography ending also blew me away. If you liked the first one, I recommend you see *RoboCop 2*. Though the story isn't as good, splatter fans will love the scene where Cain's brain is removed, not to mention the gigantic body count. I wouldn't mind a *Robo 3*, as long as Bottin and Dennis Pawlik are around for the FX.

Troy Woodtke
Maumee, OH

...I am writing to congratulate you on Kim Johnson's fantastic article on *RoboCop 2* and Dennis Pawlik in issue #95! The piece cleared up a few misconceptions about the suit, especially the time it took to put Peter Weller into it. Five to six minutes was our fastest in a run timed by Peter, but even our average (10 to 12 minutes) was excellent. With your article, I also had one of

my early wishes fulfilled, and that was to appear in *FANGORIA*. I would like to also mention some of the others on the RoboTeam, without whom things never would have gone as smoothly as they did. In the picture on page 31 are (left to right): Moni Yakim, Peter's movement trainer, RoboTeam head Dennis Pawlik, Greg Punctatz, who worked mainly with the second unit and on the original *RoboCop*, Robo, myself, Richard Wright—also from the second unit—and Scott Harmon. Shop work, all the maintenance that kept the suits available and working each day, was expertly handled by repairman Ralph Unger, and the results painted by shop head Keith Benjamin and Danny Alvarado. Bonnie Glendinning kept the shop supplied with all the necessities. Thank you again for the wonderful coverage!

Robert J. Lonergan
6702 Wimbledon Estates
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Spring, TX 77379

The Night HE Got Cut

...I recently viewed a copy of John Carpenter's *Halloween*, released on tape by Media in 1989. This version was quite different from the *Halloween* I remember. It includes a few scenes I had never seen be-

fore, and cuts other scenes short.

The first notable change is the inclusion of a bit in which Dr. Loomis sits before a board of doctors who inform him of their decision to keep Michael at the sanitarium until he turns 21. We also see Loomis confront Michael in his room. Another addition shows how Michael freed himself and the other patients the night of his escape, with the word "sister" scrawled in crayon on his door.

The price for this bonus footage is high. Most of the kill scenes are cut short; we don't see Annie or Bob get stabbed, only strangled. Subsequently, Linda's strangulation is trimmed by a few seconds. Another inane cut involves the total excision of a scene showing Laurie and Annie smoking.

This version of *Halloween* would have been much better with both the restored scenes and the kills left intact. Tampering with a 10-year-old classic that was rated R in the first place is an unforgivable act in this day of rampant censorship. While the film still retains the tension that made it so popular, the unnecessary cuts are annoying and ridiculous. The people behind this owe John Carpenter and all *Halloween* fans an immediate apology.

Blu Gilliland



Can't get enough of those KNB guys? Check out the upcoming *Monsters* show "The Waiting Game" and our episode guide in *FANGORIA HORROR SPECTACULAR* #2, now on sale.

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What you saw was the television version of *Halloween*, which was accidentally sent out when Media rereleased

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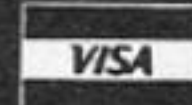
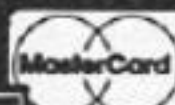
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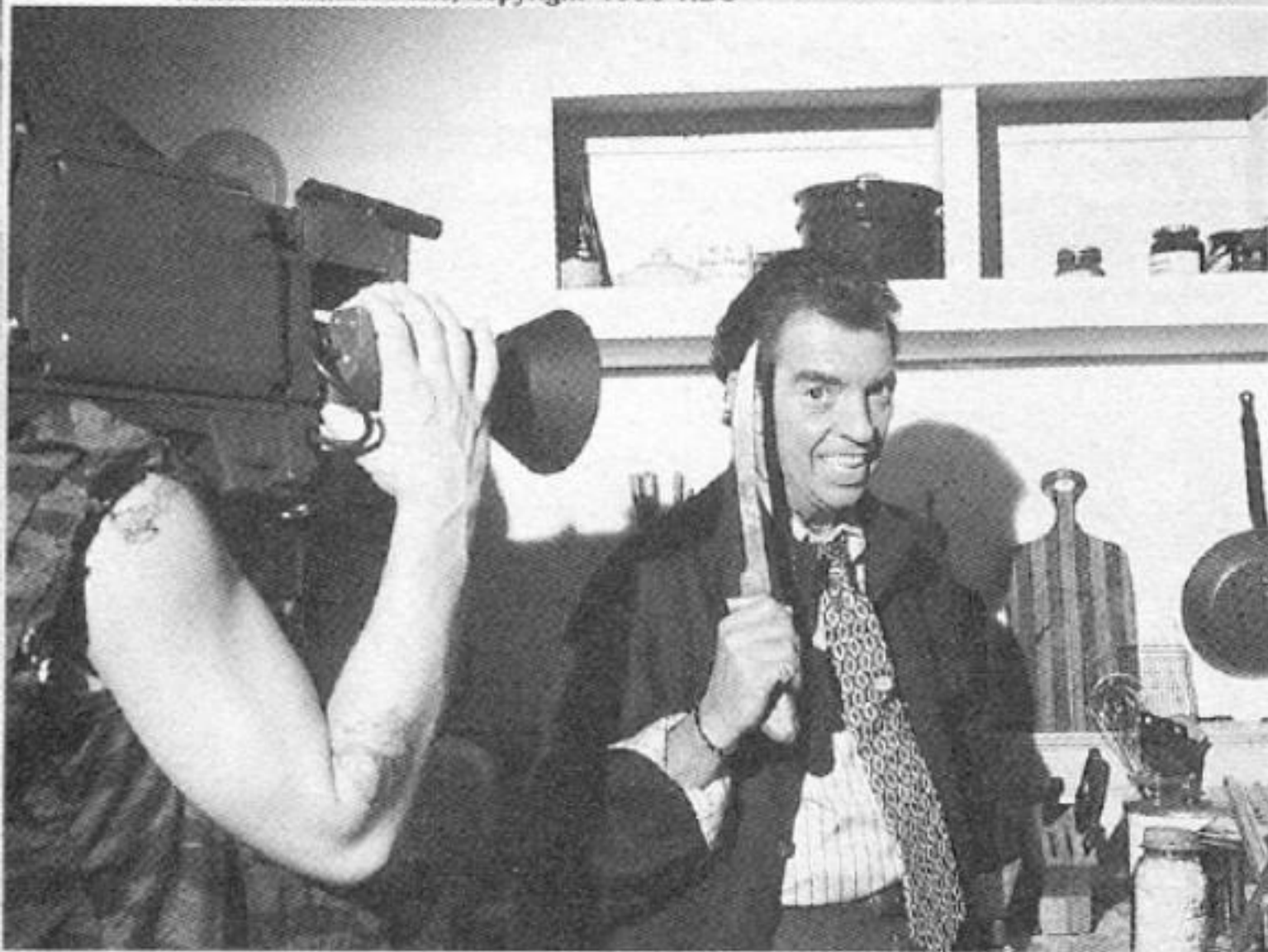
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Morton sells out!

the movie on cassette. The company has been doing its best to replace these tapes with the original theatrical version; anyone who runs across the TV cut should tell their store owner or return the tape to Media's customer service department (5730 Buckingham Parkway, Culver City, CA 90230) for a replacement.

Thumbs Down for Poll Results

...I've always respected your readers' opinions and tried to learn from them, until Fango #95. I was appalled when I saw the winners and losers of the movie poll. I mean, *Pet Sematary* for best movie? Sure it was cute, but it doesn't compare to the rawness of *Henry* or the incredibly fun gorefest *Bad Taste*.

Then when I came to the losers, I thought your readership was either brain dead or didn't see 75 percent of the movies listed. Granted, *Friday VIII* wasn't great, but it wasn't anywhere near the worst of 1989, and neither was *Halloween 5*. The worst was *The Toxic Avenger II*, and anyone who has seen it would agree. The next worst were the unbelievably stupid yawnfests *Nightmare 5, 1*, *Madman* and *Leviathan*.

One more thing: Now that you know most of your readers' opinions, I think most of us would like to know yours.

James R. Turner

12332 Butterfield Drive NW
Pickerington, OH 43147

The Fango staff picked *Henry* as best film too, but you should remember that not many readers got to see it until this year. As far as the worst films go, Tony Timpone agrees that *Toxic Avenger II* deserves the dishonor, while Michael Gingold (who is biased by his cameo in *Toxic*) picks *Friday VIII*.

Down on Downey

...I saw something that really ticked me off recently. Remember on *The Morton Downey Jr. Show* when Tony Timpone was on and Mort and his fellow fools were blasting horror? Well, on a recent episode of HBO's *Tales from the Crypt* entitled "Television Terror," who should turn up but Morton Downey! When Mort was criticizing horror on his program, he held up an ish of Fango. He was quick to point out the cover, which had the

killer Santa from the "And All through the House" episode of the HBO show. In my eyes, Mort has proven himself a complete hypocrite by starring in a *Crypt* episode. It's nicely ironic that, with the failure of his show, he had to turn to the very same horror that he so prominently bashed to support himself!

Ron Prescott
21020 Lawson Avenue
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

...I just finished reading the *Chicago Tribune*, and came across an article in which it says that Morton Downey Jr. will have a part in the upcoming sequel to *Predator*. Now, it is my understanding that good ol' Mort had a show in which he not only condemned the horror community, saying that slasher movies persuade people to kill others, but also never let Anthony Timpone get a single word in. Well, I think Mort is a hypocritical, two-faced, lying \$#%#!

Craig Warmbold
4575 Narragansett
Chicago, IL 60630

Funny, we always thought he was just a rabble-rousing, ignorant blowhard. Guess it takes all kinds.

Top of the Class

...Looking for an entertaining action/sci-fi flick to watch? Find *Class of 1999*! Gangs on motorcycles with Uzis and rocket launchers run wild through their high school, wasting teachers that are really government military cyborgs! Besides the excitement, there's nasty makeup FX and believable performances by Malcolm McDowell and Stacy Keach. This movie never slows down

and rockets to a violent end!
Joseph DeVito
8016 South Kedvale
Chicago, IL 60652

Whither "Other" Dialogue?

...When I saw the 1972 film *The Other* on television years ago, I distinctly remember the ending scene having the one brother say in a voice-over to his twin, "Holland, do you think we'll still be able to play the game?" But this voice-over was not on the videotape version. What's the reason?

Glenn Allen Jr.
RD3, Box 3412
Windsor, NY 13865

As often happens in the wonderful world of television, *The Other* was drastically reshaped so that the masses would "get it." One of the changes was additional voice-over dialogue—with a reference to "our new home"—meant to suggest that Niles goes off to an asylum at the end, instead of remaining free as he did in the much more effective original version.

The Missing "Dead"

...I was an extra in a movie filmed in Akron, Ohio late in 1986 called *The Dead Next Door*. I've heard almost nothing of the movie since. Recently, I was told that FANGORIA had one or two articles about it sometime in early 1987, and that possibly two different issues had these articles. Can you help?

Joseph K. Huska
5564 McKenzie Road
N. Olmsted, OH 44070

See Fango #62 for coverage of *The Dead Next Door*, which you can finally catch on Electro Video.

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Art: Chris Berg

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Photo: Courtesy Select Media

"THE HORROR HALL OF FAME":

The world of horror will honor its own when four classic films and three beloved personalities are inducted into *The Horror Hall of Fame*. The two-hour syndicated television special will air around Halloween. Hosted by Robert Englund, the first annual event is the brainchild of New York-based producers Marc Juris and Michael Haigney.

"Michael and I were sitting around one day thinking about what the definitive Halloween program

Robert Englund toasts the genre's finest in the Halloween special *The Horror Hall of Fame*.

would be," Juris relates, "and we decided that a program that presented the greatest moments from the greatest horror films would be perfect. But the hard part was deciding what the greatest moments were.

"So we decided to put together a board of directors made up of people in the horror industry and let them decide," Juris continues. "We thought about it a little more and decided that these people and films should be recognized in some way. That's when we decided to establish *The Horror Hall of Fame* as an annual event."

The board of directors is a who's who of horror that includes Wes Craven, Clive Barker, Tobe Hooper, Robert Englund, Roger Corman, George Romero, John Carpenter, Tom Savini, Forrest J Ackerman, Robert Short, Kevin Yagher, Stephen King, Fango's Tony Timpone and others.

The show will feature celebrity presenters, a do-it-yourself makeup demonstration by Steve Johnson, a gag murder by Penn and Teller, and, explains the producer, a thoughtful approach to honoring the inductees.

"Each of the seven inductees will be saluted in a retrospective profile," Juris

notes. "If it's a movie, we will present interviews with those involved in its production. We will also have a segment of the show devoted to what people in other countries think of as horror."

Robert Englund is particularly honored to be associated with the program. "This is real prestige, it's like an Oscar show for horror,"

states the actor. "I like the idea that the show will focus on all aspects of the horror media. They're really doing this up in a classy way."

The first *Horror Hall of Fame* special was taped September 26 at Universal Studios in Los Angeles. Watch your TV Guide for time, channel and airdate.

—Marc Shapiro

THE TERROR TELETYPE: Stuart Gordon's *Pit and the Pendulum* remake may finally be a go project. Genre fave Lance Henriksen replaces Peter O'Toole as Torquemada; Jeffrey Combs is still part of the announced cast, but Sherilyn Fenn and Billy Dee Williams are not. Cross your fingers; the movie is supposed to begin shooting this fall...Steven Spielberg will direct the film version of Michael Crichton's "science fiction suspense" novel *Jurassic Park* next year. Sort of a *Westworld* with dinosaurs, it's about an amusement park where genetic-mechanical prehistoric creatures go on a rampage...Jeff (The Kindred) Obrow is directing the latest Dean R. Koontz adaptation, *The Servants of Twilight*. Shooting begins this month for Vidmark...Vampires will be coming back in a big way next year, with more than half a dozen projects in the works at various studios. They include the long-announced film of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, being scripted by Michael (The Witches of Eastwick) Cristofer for Geffen Films; Paramount's *Nightland*, which Andrew (The Final Conflict) Birkin is rewriting from an original script by John Ries and Cory Tynan; *Red Sleep*, from Silver Pictures and writers Mick Garris and Richard Christian Matheson; *Innocent Blood*, scripted by Michael Wolk; and *Blue Blood*, written by John (Black Roses) Fasano (who is also, for the record, co-scripting the final draft of *Alien III* with Larry Ferguson). Most of these bloodsucker sagas are described as hip, slick action-thrillers, on the order of *The Lost Boys*, which is itself set for sequelization next year...Classic monsters have bitten the small screen, too. Garris and Tom (Friday the 13th VI) McLoughlin have collaborated on the *She-Wolf of London* series for MCA Television. Kate (Leatherface) Hodge stars. In addition, *Dracula: The Series* is coming from Blair Entertainment.



"PREDATOR 2": Jim and John Thomas had barely typed "Fade Out" on the original *Predator* script when they were bombarded by sequel-minded studio executives with the question of, "What's next?"

"The fantasy I always had was to put the Predator in another kind of jungle," says Jim Thomas. "An urban jungle." Thomas' fantasy has become 20th Century Fox's reality in the form of the long-awaited sequel *Predator 2*, which recently completed filming and is set for a Christmas release.

Predator 2, directed by Stephen (Nightmare 5) Hopkins, opens in a war-torn, environmentally unsound, late 1990s Los Angeles. Amidst a drug war over who will own Los Angeles strides Danny (Lethal Weapon) Glover. While attempting to keep law and order from totally unraveling, Glover stumbles upon a series of grisly murders that he believes to be narcotics-related. He soon discovers that more Predators have landed, and the drug lords have become the hunted.

Predator 2 also stars Ruben Blades, Bill Paxton, Gary Busey, Maria Conchita Alonso and Kent McCord. The sequel once again features the special makeup FX of Stan Winston.

According to John Thomas, *Predator 2* was a much easier script to write than the first "because we were so familiar with the story elements. The first film was built more in terms of mythos and grand scale. Those elements will be around in this one, but instead of being in the jungle, we're faced with the challenge of mixing those elements with the technology of the future."

"Because of the nature of the first film, we had a lot of detail and backstory about the Predator that we had to leave out," brother Jim adds. "But we're including all those missing elements in this one. This story is essentially the base for what may come in future films."

When Kevin Peter Hall slipped out of his monster

suit for the last time on the original film, he didn't expect to ever jump back in.

"I never thought they'd make another one," he says. "When I first heard they were planning a sequel, I thought, 'Oh no.' But then they sent me the script, and it was such a great story I was hooked. I said I'd never do this again, but here I am," he laughs.

"This is a different creature," Hall adds. "He's younger, a bit more undisciplined and a lot more athletic. And of course, Danny is about six inches taller than [original star] Arnold [Schwarzenegger], which is making this much more of a physical challenge.

"But acting in this costume is still pretty basic stuff. When Stephen asks for hurt, angry or triumphant, that's the look I give him. Without dialogue, I'm finding myself basically being a pose artist."

Hall, however, claims that there is more to the story than blood and guts. "Sure, this is a chase, a hunt and an action picture. But the bottom line is that *Predator 2* is really a battle of wits."

And, claims Jim Thomas, it is also a deeper look into the Predator's character. "What we see is that the creature is not a psychopathic monster. He's pure in what he does. There is a scene in which he comes upon a little boy with a toy gun. He scans the gun,



He's a mean green mother from outer space, and he's back in *Predator 2*.

sees the boy is not a threat and leaves him alone. His aim is a challenging hunt. And in the drug dealers he finds that challenge."

—Marc Shapiro

Just when you thought it was safe to call 911, Larry Cohen's *The Ambulance* hits the streets this fall. Eric Roberts, James Earl Jones and (blood) Red Buttons star in the suspense thriller.

Photo: Melissa Cohen/Copyright Esparza Katz Productions



Predator 2 Photos: Richard Foreman/Copyright 1990 20th Century Fox

The Amazing Colossal Man leads off Film Forum 2's amazing colossal genre fest.



Photo: Courtesy Tom Weaver

ARKOFF LIVES: Good news for fans of teenage werewolves, three-eyed mutants, amazing colossal men, and homemade monsters—former American International Pictures head Samuel Z. Arkoff has announced that RCA/Columbia will release 40 movies from AIP's golden age on videocassette. The titles include such dandies as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* ("a \$100,000 film, \$1 million title," according to Arkoff), *It Conquered the World*, *Invasion of the Saucer-Men* and *The She-Creature*. The first cassettes should start appearing on video store shelves this fall.

Along with director John Frankenheimer and actor-director Dennis Hopper, Arkoff was recently honored at the USA Film Festival in Dallas. *Werewolf*, *Saucer-Men* and *Reform School Girl*, three great examples of AIP's youth-on-the-loose pictures, were screened, along with a reel of trailers that offered incontrovertible proof of the company's mastery of ballyhoo. After the screenings, relaxing at a late dinner and smoking a cigar as big as the average forearm, Arkoff explained AIP's tardy entry into the home video market. "In some cases, we've just had trouble finding the material," he reveals. "Some of it was lost. But we've been searching, and we've gradually been able to find the negatives. In fact, I just discovered the original 35mm negative for one of them in England! How the hell it got there I haven't the slightest idea."

"Also, a lot of the early Eastmancolor pictures have turned to magenta," he goes on. "Of the 40 pictures, most

were black and white, so there's been no problem with the quality on those. It's the color that's been a problem."

Those who can't wait for the cassettes might want to get a few friends together, pony up some cash, and see the films the way they were meant to be seen—on a big screen. Kit Parker Films (1245 Tenth Street, Monterey, CA 93940) has just picked up "The Classic American International Pictures Collection" for non-theatrical release on 16mm film. For a rental price of \$95 a pop, AIP aficionados can choose from 41 titles, including Roger Corman's immortal *Teenage Caveman* (with Robert Vaughn, 1958) and Bert I. Gordon's *Amazing Colossal Man* (1957), as well as actor-director Bruno VeSota's gruesome zero-budgeter *The Brain Eaters* (1958). The rental fee covers a one-day showing.

American International may continue to exist only in the fond memories of those who came of age in the '50s and '60s, when the company's double features blazed across the nation's theater and drive-in screens. But Arkoff International Pictures, its successor in style as well as initials, is alive and very well, thank you. "For the first time in 40 years, I'm located on a major lot, in Burbank," Arkoff told the USA Festival audience. "And we're working on about 12 pictures. One of them is called *Ice Rider*, and it's got really terrific special effects—and expensive ones. It's about a day when the world has turned to ice. That picture—which is being financed by someone else, I'm happy to say—will cost more than the first 200

pictures I made."

Later, at dinner, Arkoff said he couldn't talk for publication about any of his other projects, explaining, "We're dealing now with a major company, and until they announce, there's nothing I can say about it." He did, however, indicate that at least some of the pictures on Arkoff International's horizon would be horror films.

"Well," he began, taking a puff of his cigar, "it's really been our specialty over the years, you might say."

Those wanting to experience Arkoff firsthand might consider another stop on his tour, the Fourth Annual

Festival of Fantasy, Horror and Science Fiction, set for October 26 through November 15 at the Film Forum 2 in New York City. He'll preside over the screening of such gems as *How to Make a Monster* and *War of the Colossal Beast* (both with restored color sequences), and *The Saga of the Viking Women and Their Voyage to the Waters of the Great Sea Serpent*. Plus, there will be plenty of other AIP monster movies, as well as plenty of teen films from the greatest teenpic studio of them all. Call (212) 727-8100 for details.

—John Wooley



Portrait of a lady and her log, courtesy of David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*.

DAVID LYNCH AND "TWIN PEAKS": "It's a strange world, isn't it?" That's the question asked and answered many times in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*.

"Yes, it would be safe to say that that particular idea is a major part of my outlook on life," agrees 44-year-old director Lynch. It also sums up his body of work. From *Eraserhead* in 1977 through the current ultra-violent and erotic *Wild at Heart*, Lynch has consistently made audiences squirm in their seats with films that are simultaneously repulsive and fascinating, funny and grotesque.

Yes, it is a strange world. But it's proven popular enough that Lynch's prime-time TV series *Twin Peaks* is now in its second season on ABC. Although he admits that "I don't watch much television," Lynch knows from personal experience that nighttime soap operas are both popular and compelling. "Even though *Twin Peaks* involves a murder, the townspeople are pretty fun characters," Lynch opines. "There's a number of really good relationships and strange goings-on and secrets. I thought the show would please a large amount of people. If it only appealed to people who like my movies, they would have yanked it off the air before the first commercial."

What has certainly endeared Lynch to both movie and TV audiences is his gift for creating eccentric characters with quirky habits. In *Eraserhead*, Henry keeps his small change in a pot of water in his dresser drawer; *Blue Velvet* features a transvestite who lip-syncs to Roy Orbison; and of course, *Twin Peaks* has the Log Lady, a character who carries a log everywhere she goes and talks to it.

With that kind of inspired goofiness, the question just begs to be asked—how does Lynch come up with this stuff? "I don't know," he laughs. "I'm not sure why they do those things or what they mean. They just popped into my head and sort of stuck. It's like fishing. When you catch something, you never know what will come up."

Strange world, isn't it?

—Robert Pegg

VIDEO CHOPPING LIST

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

- ❑ **BURIED ALIVE (RCA/COLUMBIA, 1990):** Robert Vaughn, Donald Pleasence and John Carradine star in a Poe anthology about the demented goings-on at Ravenscroft Hall, an asylum turned home for troubled teenage girls.
- ❑ **THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE & HER LOVER (VIDMARK, 1990):** Director Peter Greenaway's controversial excursion through a gluttonous, decadent society culminates in one of the most powerful cannibal scenes ever filmed. Available in R-rated and original uncut versions.
- ❑ **CRY-BABY (MCA, 1990):** John Waters goes from brazenly bizarre to gorgeously grotesque like no one else. This time, Johnny Depp, Traci Lords and Iggy Pop star in a twisted '50s-style musical comedy.
- ❑ **DANGEROUS GAME (ACADEMY, 1989):** A group of teens are insidiously stalked through an empty department store by a psychotic killer cop. Director Stephen Hopkins went on to helm the fifth *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Predator 2*.
- ❑ **DEF BY TEMPTATION (SGE, 1990):** Troma tale in which a southern divinity student comes to the Big Apple, only to run afoul of a sultry succubus. See *GOREZONE* #15.
- ❑ **DR. CALIGARI (SGE, 1990):** The granddaughter of the infamous one is a perverted and dangerous sex experimenter in a

weird world of sensual derangement. A *Rocky Horror* for the sexually psychotic.

- ❑ **THE FIRST POWER (ORION, 1990):** Young gun Lou Diamond Phillips pursues an unstoppable murderer who possesses just about every supernatural power imaginable—except the ability to make this hokey flick scary.
- ❑ **THE GUARDIAN (MCA, 1990):** William Friedkin's first horror flick since *The Exorcist* features a bedeviled babysitter from beyond with a kid-eating tree at her disposal.
- ❑ **MEET THE HOLLOWHEADS (MEDIA, 1990):** Formerly *Life on the Edge*, this futuristic tale of a terminally crazy family is a loony look at our foibles and fantasies, directed by FX veteran Tom Burman.
- ❑ **MURDER ON LINE ONE (ACADEMY, 1990):** A grisly killer is caged by the cops, but a beauteous babe still gets stalked and savagely mutilated bodies continue to materialize.
- ❑ **THE NIGHT BRINGS CHARLIE (QUEST, 1990):** Charlie Pucket was disfigured by a chainsaw and now lives a quiet rural life working for the coroner—until the town's teens turn up trashed by a tree-trimming tool.
- ❑ **NIGHTLIFE (MCA, 1990):** Not to be confused with the teen zombie actioner, this stylish vampire thriller/comedy genre twister stars Maryam d'Abo and future Barnabas Collins Ben Cross as vampires in modern Mexico City. Made for cable.
- ❑ **THE POSSESSED (UNICORN, 1977):** What (or who) has gotten into the girls at a very private school in Salem, MA? Wanna take a guess? Or you can ask Harrison Ford, James Farentino and Diana Scarwid. Made for TV.
- ❑ **SATAN'S PRINCESS (PARAMOUNT, 1990):** A.K.A. *The Malediction*. Police vs. the Prince of Darkness, with a sexually satanic vixen at the vortex and a one-way ticket to hell as the payoff. Directed by Bert I. Gordon.
- ❑ **SPLIT (AIP, 1990):** Offbeat and outlandish look at a society governed by non-human, "big Brother"-type computer people. Acid flashbacks abound.
- ❑ **SYNGENOR (SOUTH GATE, 1990):** A Synthesized Genetic Organism, built for battle and ugly to boot, escapes its lab and runs amok with a swarm of scientists in perpetual pursuit. See *Fango* #96.



Take our word for it: *Cry-Baby's* Hatchet Face is the scariest thing on home video this month.

- ❑ **TALES FROM THE CRYPT (HBO, 1990):** Newer, scarier, redder selections from directors Tom Holland, Mary Lambert and Howard Deutch.
- ❑ **TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE: THE MOVIE (PARAMOUNT, 1990):** George Romero adapts Stephen King; Michael McDowell adapts Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; and KNB EFX provides the gore. Directed by John Harrison.
- ❑ **TALES OF THE UNKNOWN (AIP, 1990):** Quite tasty and tempestuous tome of *Twilight Zone*-ish tales of terror to titillate, tantalize and torture your soul.

—Compiled by Larry Barsky



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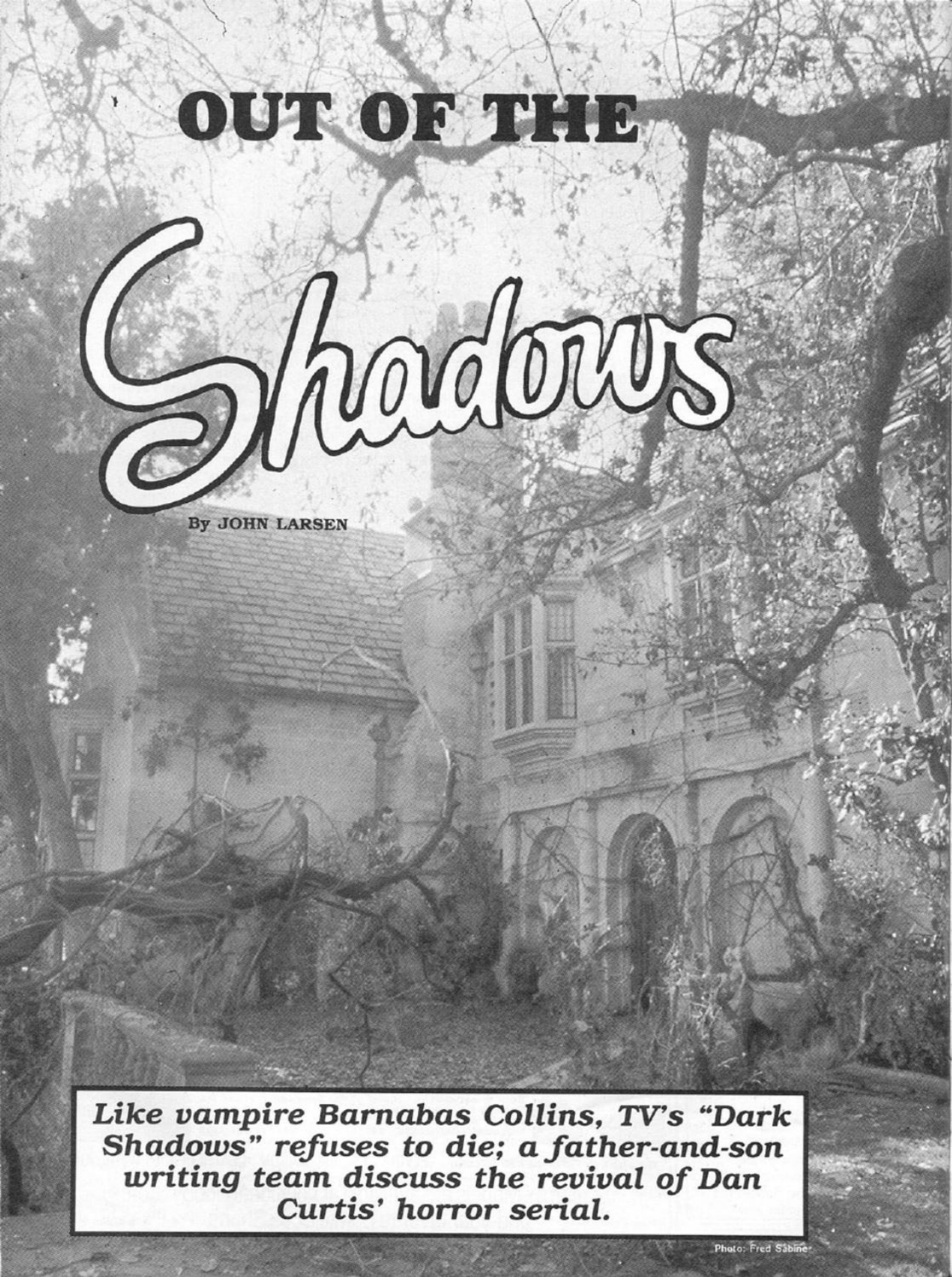
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OUT OF THE *Shadows*

By JOHN LARSEN

Like vampire Barnabas Collins, TV's "Dark Shadows" refuses to die; a father-and-son writing team discuss the revival of Dan Curtis' horror serial.

Dark Shadows, the late '60s classic horror soap that entranced viewers with bizarre tales woven around ghosts, witches and a 200-year-old vampire named Barnabas Collins, has at long last been resurrected from the vast TV graveyard by the series' original creator and executive producer, Dan Curtis. In mid-April, Curtis wrapped up filming of a new, two-hour *Dark Shadows* movie shot in and around Beverly Hills, California. Curtis directed the TV movie from a script he co-wrote with the film's line producer, Steve Feke. The project marks a return to the world of horror for Curtis, whose long list of fright flicks includes *Burnt Offerings* and *Trilogy of Terror*. His mastery of the macabre and his inimitable sense of shuddery, nerve-shattering pacing have caused many a sleepless night among terror fans.

The *Dark Shadows* movie will air on NBC, and the network is also planning to launch an all-new, one-hour *Dark Shadows* series in prime time. The show will serve as a mid-season replacement series, and NBC has placed an order with Curtis for the first 11 episodes, which began production last summer.

One of the major creative forces behind *Dark Shadows*' success in the late '60s was writer Sam Hall, who, along with son Matthew Hall, served as a story consultant on the TV movie and is plotting out and writing the new series. "Dan first mentioned the project to me in August 1989," Hall remembers. "He'd been made several offers to revive *Dark Shadows*, and he was really amazed by it. He asked if I'd be interested in it, and I said, 'Yes, of course, I'd love to do it.'"

Curtis then made the potentially controversial decision of recasting all of the major *Dark Shadows* roles. It was a move that those associated with the project felt necessary for the retelling of the series' original story. "Dan plans to bring back some of the original *Dark Shadows* cast members in new roles for the series," Hall informs. "It wasn't possible to do that in the movie, since everything had to be concentrated on just getting the initial story off the ground. Fortunately, the new acting company is just marvelous."

The new cast includes Ben Cross as the sinister Barnabas Collins and two-time Academy Award nominee Jean Simmons as Collins family matriarch Elizabeth Collins Stoddard, who was portrayed in the original series by former Hollywood glamour girl Joan (Suspiria) Bennett. The role of Dr. Julia

Hoffman, originated in the '60s by Hall's wife, the late, Oscar-nominated actress Grayson Hall, has gone to Barbara Steele, known to fright fans for her roles in shockers such as *Black Sunday* and *The Pit and the Pendulum*.

"I adore Barbara," Hall comments with genuine enthusiasm. "She's a terribly bright, funny, original woman. She'd produced the *Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance* miniseries with Dan and in the process had become great friends with him and his wife.

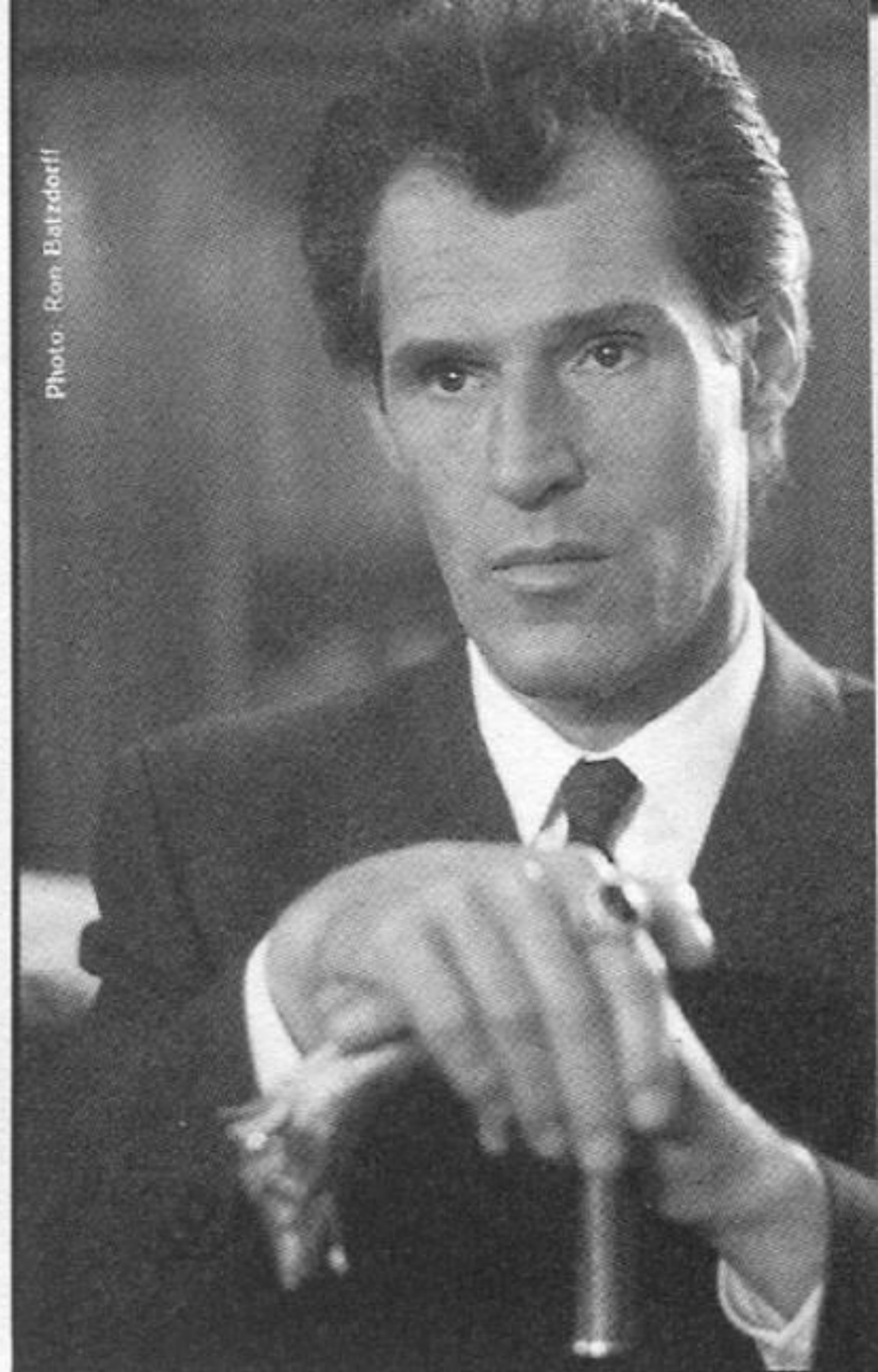
"She'd given up acting completely, and it was quite a task conning her into returning to it," Hall laughs. "She said to me, 'I'm always the one who goes around playing the vampire in these things; I don't know about playing this straight stuff.' So I wouldn't be at all surprised, if the show is a success, to find by the second year that Barbara becomes Julia Hoffman, Girl Vampire!"

Also joining the new *Dark*

**"I don't think that there are any major variations from the original *Dark Shadows*. Barnabas will be the same."
—Sam Hall, writer**

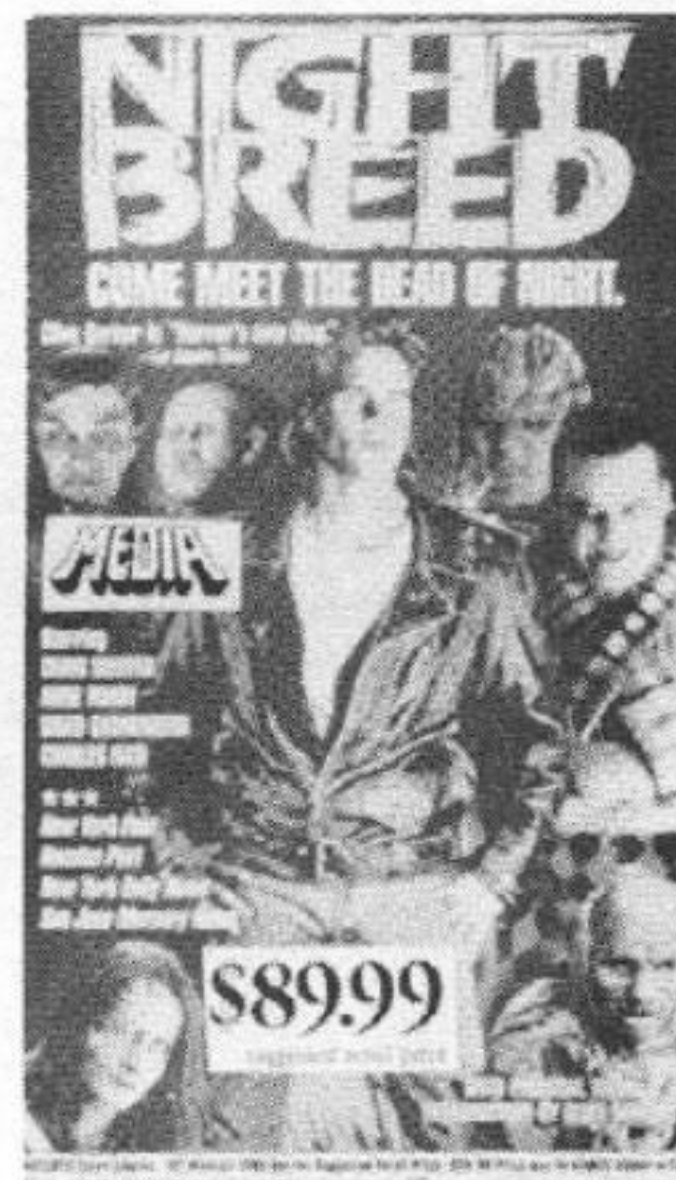
Shadows cast are Roy Thinnes (Roger Collins), Joanna Going (Victoria Winters), Barbara Blackburn (Carolyn Stoddard), Ely Pouget (Maggie Evans), Jim Fyfe (Willie Loomis) and Julianna McCarthy (Mrs. Johnson). Composer Robert Cobert, who created *Dark Shadows*' creepy score back in the '60s, will enhance Curtis' bag of frights with an eerie new soundtrack. Cobert plans to bring an updated, synthesized sound to the new *Dark Shadows*.

Hall reveals that the movie opens with the arrival of David Collins' attractive young governess Victoria Winters in Collinsport, Maine, the quaint fishing village where Collinwood, the dreary, fog-en-shrouded Collins mansion, is located. Victoria meets the troubled Collins family and soon learns that nothing at Collinwood is what it appears to be. An aura of mystery, danger and horror pervades the long, dark corridors of the old mansion and seems to emanate from the very walls and ancient stone foun-



Ben Cross revamps the Barnabas character for the new *Dark Shadows*.

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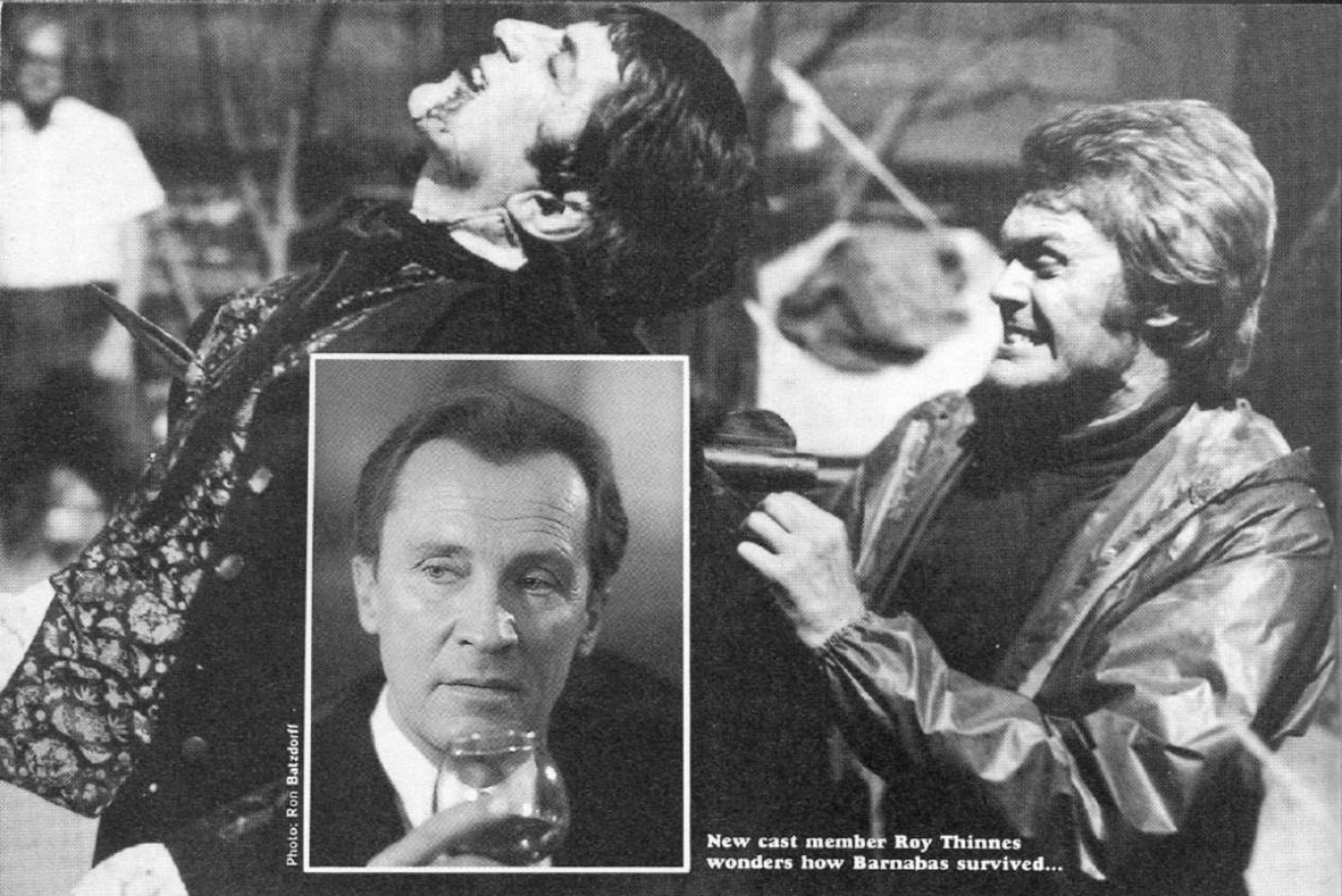


Photo: Ron Batzdorff

New cast member Roy Thinnes wonders how Barnabas survived...

dations of Collinwood itself.

A chained coffin is discovered in the family mausoleum by the greedy Willie Loomis. Upon opening the coffin, Willie finds, to his horror, that he has released the vampire Barnabas Collins, who has been imprisoned in the sealed casket for two centuries. The bloodthirsty ghoul heads for Collinwood, terrorizing the unsuspecting residents of the gloomy estate, all of whom believe him to be a harmless cousin from England. Eventually his dreadful secret is discovered by Dr. Julia Hoffman, a blood specialist who attempts to cure his vampirism.

The new *Dark Shadows* will not depart from the original series' popular theme of time travel. Hall's plans for the series include whisking viewers back through time to reveal the 200-year-old secrets of the Collins family ancestors. In the past, Barnabas falls prey to the seductive charms of the beautiful young witch, Angelique, who places the vampire curse upon him.

Hall emphasizes Curtis' dedication to remaining true to the original series' concepts and characters, noting that writers studied synopses of more than 1,100 original *Dark Shadows* scripts. "We wanted to make just a few changes," he reports. "We've changed the background of

the Roger Collins character and minimized the involvement of Maggie Evans, although the actress that Dan cast in Maggie's part has worked out quite well. We were impressed with her performance when we saw it in the dailies, but by then it was too late to go back to the original concept of the Maggie character, so we're beginning to think about

"Barbara Steele said to me, 'I'm always the one who goes around playing the vampire in these things.'"

—Sam Hall, writer

finding more for her to do in the series.

"Most of the other changes have been very slight. I don't think that there are any major variations from the original theme of *Dark Shadows*. Barnabas will be much the same. He'll start out being quite evil but, in time, as his relationship with Julia develops, you'll see him having attacks of conscience about

...the staking Roger Davis gave him in 1970's *House of Dark Shadows*.

what he's doing. We'll be making an effort to keep him vulnerable."

Matthew Hall, author of the horror novel *Nightmare Logic*, was ecstatic when Curtis offered him the position on *Dark Shadows* and is dividing his time between work on the series and the new novel he has been commissioned to pen. "Dan called and said he'd read my book—and then he said, 'You know, you're sicker than your father!'" Hall laughs, acknowledging that this is high praise for any horror writer. "He offered me the job and I was just blown away. I was about 9 years old when my Dad was writing the original show. Basically, what I remember is hanging around the studio where they taped and coming home from school to find these *Dark Shadows* storyline sessions going on in my living room.

"It's Dan's show and whatever Dan wants, Dan gets," the younger Hall adds. "He does as much of it himself as he physically can, and he'll do it as many times as it needs to be done to get it right. It's his responsibility whether the fans like it or not. It really all comes down to Dan's decision-making in terms of the story, the dialogue, the casting,



Even if you're one of the writers (Matthew Hall, right, with father Sam), you can't take your eyes off Barbara Steele.



Original Barnabas Jonathan Frid gets close with co-star Kathryn Leigh Scott.

Photo: Courtesy John Larson

and then, of course, he's also directing it. So he becomes completely involved. For example, when he hits on an idea in a story conference, he'll act out everything the actor would do, and suddenly *he* becomes Barnabas, or *he* becomes Willie. He just knows what he wants and he'll do what it takes to get it, which is totally cool."

Sam Hall comments, "I'm just filled with admiration for Dan's talents and the way he's handled the project. When Dan reads a scene, he can just see everything in his head. He automatically eliminates anything that doesn't belong there and what you see on the screen is exactly what he has visualized."

The younger Hall confesses with unbridled enthusiasm that he's fallen in love with the look and feel of the new movie. "Everything just came together so perfectly," he says. "I was in watching rushes one day and there's one scene that I was in awe of from the first moment I saw it. Ben Cross, as Barnabas, is standing in the darkened woods and the fog is coming up behind him and it was really spellbinding. I was struck with the feeling that although this wasn't *the* original, this *was* *Dark Shadows*. That same spirit was there. It's got that same broodingly romantic sense of menace, that tension in the air."

Comparing the technical wizardry employed on the new *Dark Shadows* to the special FX performed on the original series, Sam Hall chuckles and comments, "The bats are better! There's this scene in the movie where they fly out of a cave near the mausoleum, and they seemed so realistic. I remember those silly little things flopping around on strings on the original series. There's just so much more that can be done today as opposed to the old days."

The elder Hall joined the original *Dark Shadows*, which haunted the airwaves of ABC daytime from 1966-1971, several months after his wife, Grayson, was hired to play Julia Hoffman. "My wife threw this big party and Dan Curtis was there," Hall remembers. "He asked me if I'd be interested in writing the series, and I told him that I never write anything people ask me to write at parties. I didn't think he'd ever read a thing I'd written in my life, but I told him to call me in a few days if he was serious, which he did. Dan was, and still is, a very intuitive man."

The soap had been off to a rocky start but its initially unimpressive ratings skyrocketed with the April 1967 introduction of the Collins clan's most nightmarish secret, their undead ancestor Barnabas. Played to chilling perfection by Jonathan Frid, he was often presented as a twisted fiend haunted by the horrific deeds his unholy thirst led him to commit. "Barnabas was in a terrible situation," Hall recalls. "He knew he was a murderer and Julia was his only hope of escape."

Frid became an overnight celebrity, capturing the hearts and imaginations of millions of fans. "It was a shock to us all that Jonathan became such a major draw," Hall says. "It was a shock to Jonathan himself. The ironic twist to all this is that Jonathan is not the man that Dan had intended to cast."

"Dan was in London doing a new version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*," Hall explains. "So Bob Costello, *Dark Shadows*' line producer, sent him still photos of the three final candidates for the role of Barnabas. Dan was to mark the picture of the man he wanted and send it back, because they'd be taping the vampire's first episodes before he returned to New York. So Dan sent back his choice, and when he returned he

watched the first Barnabas episode and said, 'My God, who is that man?' Bob Costello said, 'Well, he's the one you wanted to play Barnabas,' and Dan said, 'That isn't the right man, you asshole!'

"That's a true story," Hall laughs. "Of course, I didn't think that anyone else would have taken off in the role the way that Jonathan did. It's interesting to see Ben Cross, who is really quite good, in the role. He's different, yet he has the same lost, romantic look that Jonathan had."

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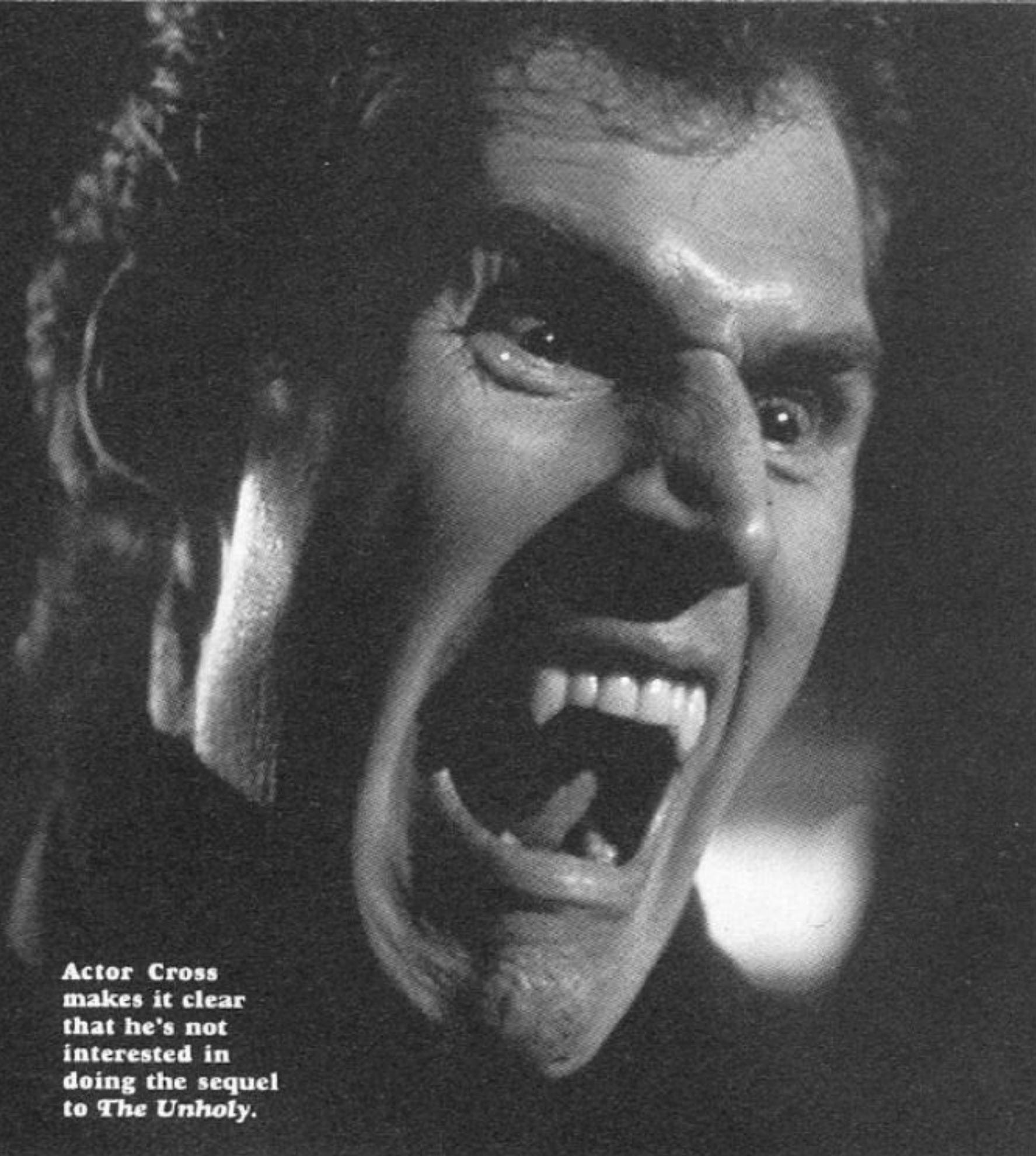
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Actor Cross makes it clear that he's not interested in doing the sequel to *The Unholy*.

Despite the overwhelming popularity of the original series, Hall feels that ABC was apprehensive about airing a show that dealt with vampires and werewolves and staged hangings, beheadings and live burials on a regular basis. "I think the network didn't believe its popularity and didn't particularly want it to succeed," he ponders. "It broke too many rules that they were quite comfortable with."

Prior to his stint on *Dark Shadows*, Hall had never tackled the formidable task of writing material designed to frighten TV viewers out of their collective wits. "I didn't know whether I could do it or not. It's a genre that never terribly interested me, although I found that I did have a knack for it. But Dan had the real genius. He was the driving force behind the show, and he still is."

While the successful team of Hall and Hall plot out the eerie, other-worldly goings-on at Collinwood, NBC is gearing up for what they hope will be a rebirth of the *Dark Shadows* craze that took the country by storm in that era gone by. However, one thing that is not dependent upon the success or failure of the new series is the ever-continuing phenomenon that is *Dark Shadows*. That, clearly, will never die. 

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All hell breaks loose when Linda Blair is Repossessed.



Linda Blair thanks her agent for not pushing her to do Exorcist III.

Linda Blair has grown into a vivacious, bubbly woman, friendly and ready to laugh at a moment's notice. She leaped from her desk to introduce herself to this FANGORIA interviewer. "Hi! I'm Linda!" Well, of course she is.

Despite a busy career in the 17 years following *The Exorcist*, Linda Blair is still best-known to the world for her role in William Friedkin's precedent-slaughtering hit—the little girl who was possessed by a demon, whose head spun on her shoulders, and who vomited green goo into the faces of those who confronted her. When an actress' entire career seems to dangle from the hook of only one role, sometimes the best idea is to laugh at oneself before the world does.

So now she's *Repossessed* in Bob Logan's spoof of the horror classic. There goes her head again, unscrewing from her shoulders, and here comes another spray of pea soup. Blair plays Nancy Aglet, who was possessed by a demon in her childhood, a spirit exorcised by Father Mayii (Leslie Nielsen); now the demon has taken over Nancy again, but this time on a nationwide religious TV show.

Linda Blair's association with *Repossessed* director Bob Logan

Linda Blair bounces back from some hard times to laugh at herself in "Repossessed."

By BILL WARREN

began when she and "Unknown Comic" Murray Langston made *Up Your Alley* for the debuting filmmaker, hoping the straight-to-video release would work as a family film. Logan had a good relationship with Blair (see *Fango* #94), and suddenly had a wild idea. "Bob came to me and said that he wanted to do a spoof of *The Exorcist*," Blair explains. "I said, 'Bob, I've lived with this character for so many years, and I just want to do other things.'" Rebuffed but not discouraged, Logan took his project to Carolco, who agreed to finance it if he could get Blair to star.

He returned to the actress, and

"he asked what it would take to get me to do it," Blair continues. "I said, 'Leslie Nielsen.' And that's how it all came to be. I love Leslie; I love the Coors commercials he did. 'And the pink slippers? They're for me.' He's the only man who could wear them on TV," Linda exclaims, with her great, uninhibited laugh.

The possessee getup by Steve LaPorte for the comedy is not as extreme as that in *The Exorcist* (which Blair described in *Fango* #60), "but it's definitely makeup!" she laughs. "Steve LaPorte's a pretty good guy, we had a good rapport. But I really don't like being in makeup. It

was uncomfortable for me, wearing that day after day." Especially when methacryl, the FX crew's favorite, was rubbed onto her face. "If you just put a thin layer on, it dries, and you move your face around so it cracks. It's a very gross feeling," she says with an embarrassed grin.

As for the film's target audience, "My generation is the one that recalls *The Exorcist*." When the film was test-screened, she notes, "We found that the head-spinning, the vomit, all of that worked for the slightly older crowd. When we tested it with teenagers, they were going, 'Why is her head spinning around?' But they loved the demon. So we said, 'OK, we've got this *Naked Gun*/slapstick type of humor, so it doesn't matter if the kids don't get the references, because they'll figure it out along the way.' And so it's being targeted from 12 to 50—I don't think there's really an age limit."

After *The Exorcist* (which wasn't her first movie, incidentally—she started her film career with *The Way We Live Now* and *The Sporting Club*), Blair made a couple of TV movies which continued her reputation as that little girl who's in all the sensational stuff. *Sarah T.—Portrait of a Teenage Alcoholic* costarred Mark Hamill and was directed by Richard Donner, but it didn't have the impact of her next video venture, *Born Innocent*. As with *The Exorcist*, events unrelated to Blair altogether—teenagers acting out in real life a graphic broomstick rape from

the TV movie—seemed to cling to her personally.

And then there was the drug scandal. The notoriety about her grew slowly, but it was a while before it affected her movie career. "I did not have a problem until I was around 19 or 20," Blair offers

"I really don't like being in makeup. It was uncomfortable for me, wearing that day after day."

spontaneously. "When I was 18, I was arrested for drugs. But I didn't have the drugs on me. I bought a dog from some people, who had talked to me on the phone and bragged about their business. Yes, I knew they dealt drugs, [but to me] the issue was that I wanted this dog, and that was

The *Monsters* episode "La Strega" put even more prosthetics on poor Linda's puss.

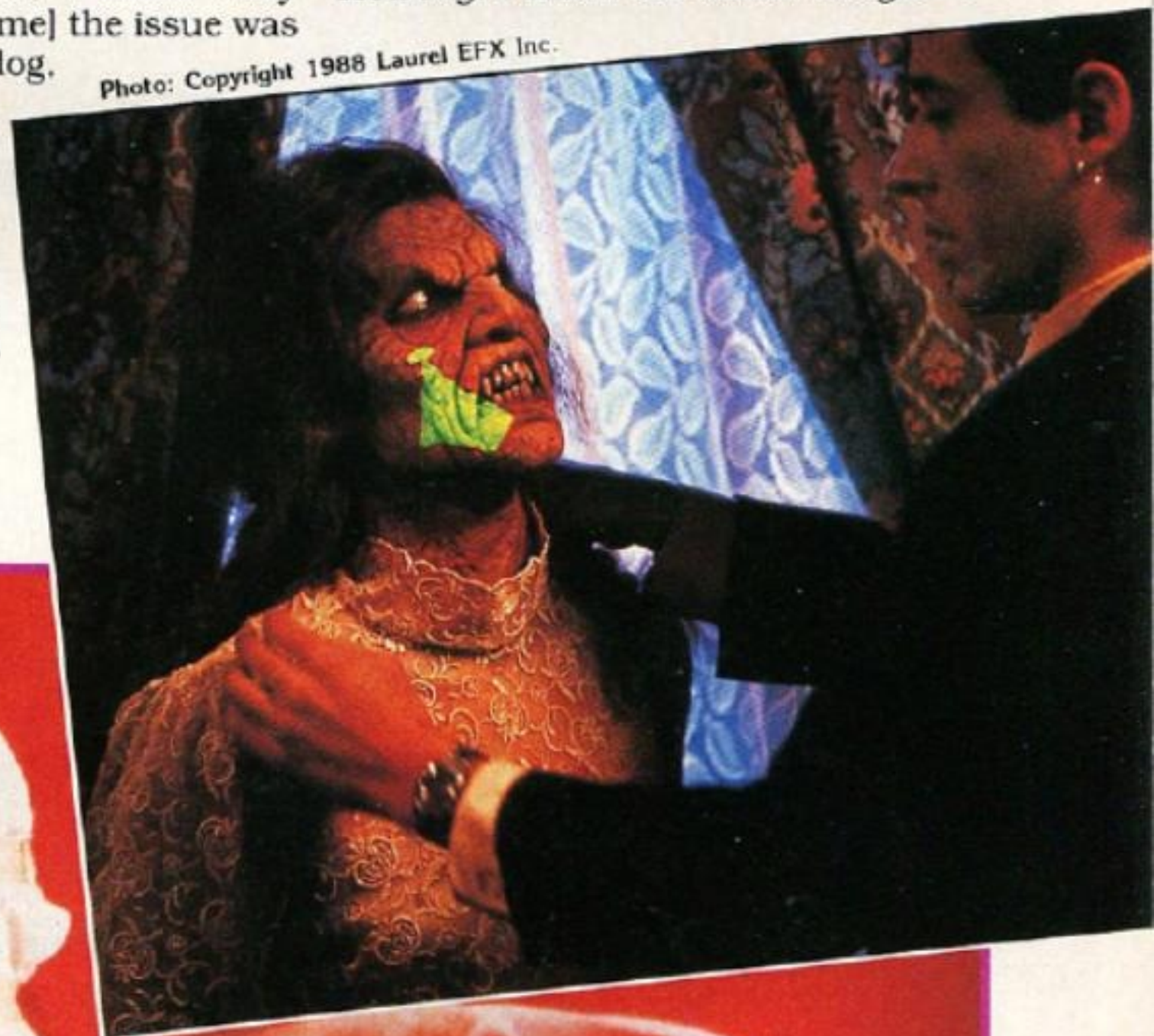
Leslie Nielsen reacts to being upstaged by the jokey possessee.

what the main stream of the conversation was about.

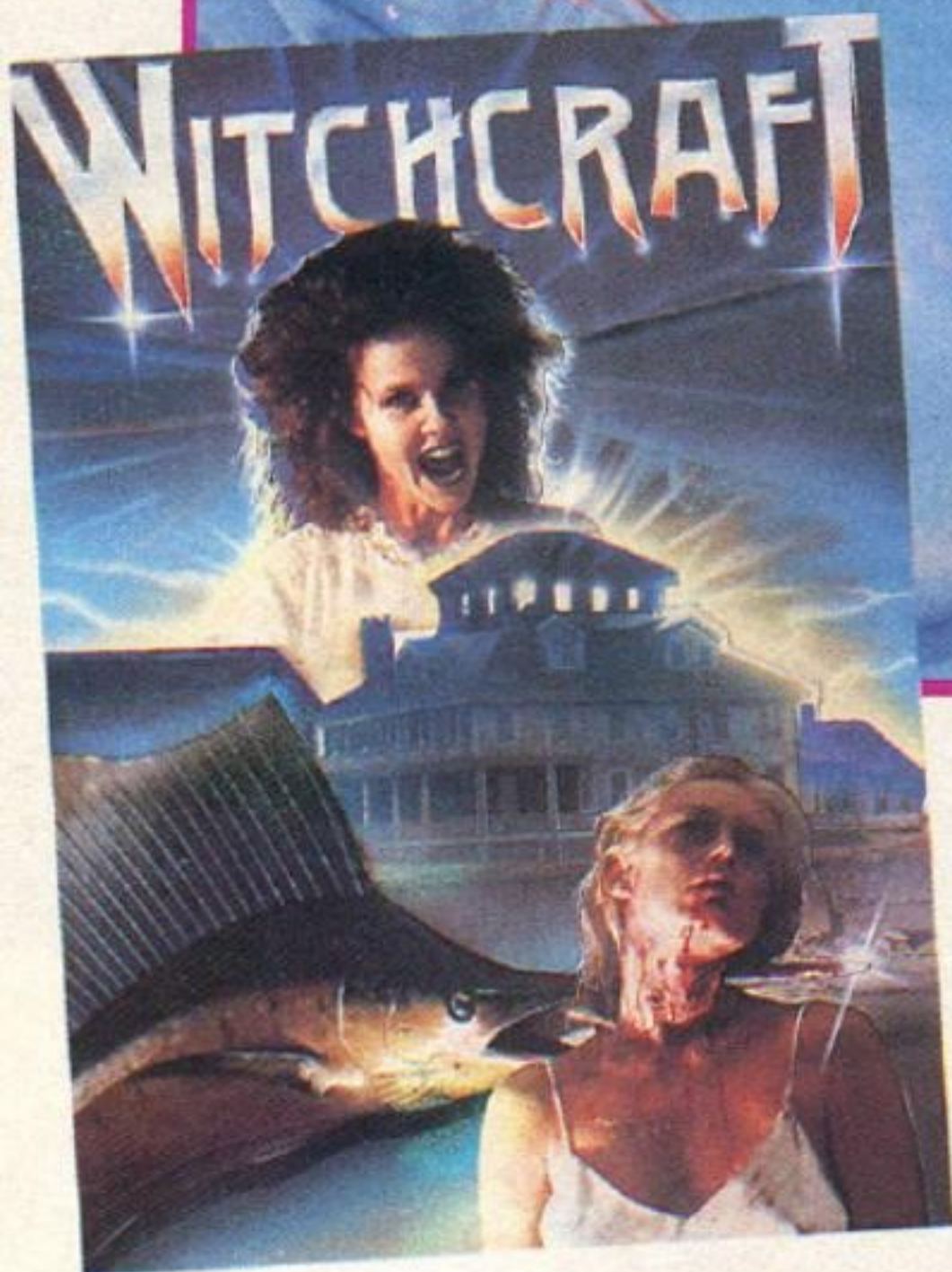
"OK," says Blair in a determined tone. "They wanted me to come up to Connecticut. To pay for the trip, [they asked me if I knew] anybody who wanted to buy some coke. Back then, that was a common question." It was one she evaded for a while, but she finally agreed to ask around. "That's conspiracy," she says firmly, still angry about the charge. "That's what I was arrested for. People do not realize that. We fought to get the charges dropped. [But] the judge said, 'I'm tired of you people in Hollywood making fun of drugs. Johnny Carson makes fun of them.' Johnny Carson doesn't realize that I was practically arrested for his jokes on TV. 'I won't stand for it,' [the judge continued.] 'Somebody is going to pay, and it's going to be you.'"

"I was blackballed because people thought I had a drug problem. I couldn't get work, except from friends like Bruce Curtis. I did *Hell Night* and I did *Roller Boogie*—I

Photo: Copyright 1988 Laurel EFX Inc.



After the head-spinning antics of *Repossessed*, Linda Blair hopes to turn her career around with more comedic roles.



Possessed by an evil spirit and the need for a fast buck, Blair went to town in Italy's *Witchcraft* (a.k.a. *Witchery*).

don't care what people said about that movie, I liked it," she laughs. "With Max Kleven, I did *Ruckus*," which may feature Blair's best performance; she's extremely good in her role as a young mother. But that film had its own problems—it was made as a tax shelter, and held back from release for many years. Other Blair films have received the same treatment, making it seem almost as though she had retired from movies.

But although the public didn't always get a chance to view her work, she points out, "I always did at least one picture [every year], even though they sometimes didn't come out right away. There are blank spots. I am too close to my own world; I know how much I worked, but other people don't."

Even as Blair continued to win parts, there were other problems and a few unwise decisions. "You don't set out to make a bad movie, but people don't always show their true colors when they sit down in a

business meeting and assure you they're going to do the best movie they can. You pump up, right before you work—you always pump up. You have to. If you're not excited, you shouldn't do the film. But people's colors start showing after a while."

Such as on one of Blair's most notorious films, *Chained Heat*, which she hates. Famous agent Jay Bernstein had been pursuing Blair for some time, saying there was no good reason she wasn't a big star. "He knew all about the drug thing, so I thought, 'Well, he made Farrah Fawcett, he made Suzanne Somers, maybe he can help.' So I went with him, and he sent me over to Billy Fine," a producer. Blair had been spending most of her time with horses—she's a hardcore animal lover—and was naive about the movie business. "I didn't know the politics of Hollywood," she admits ruefully.

"Fine told me it was about a college student, and had to do with drug issues, though she doesn't take drugs. She goes to a party, somebody spikes her drink, she hits an old man, and ends up in jail. That was the story I signed to do on paper. It didn't say anything about script approval, or that they couldn't make changes."

And change it they did. After three weeks of shooting prison scenes, Blair asked when the college scenes would be shot—and was told that the entire movie was set in the prison. She had originally not intended to do a nude scene, but with the other girls in the same shot resenting the star's refusal to disrobe, she became embarrassed and did the sequence. "Paul Nicolas directed the movie. As

"You don't set out to make a bad movie, but people don't always show their true colors when they sit down in a meeting."

I said, people sometimes don't show their true colors until you start working—and he turned out to be what we called a Nazi woman-hater. It was not a pleasant experience—I was lied to so much. I was so gullible, and I just didn't know that agents could fight for you!"

Blair has not been gullible since; all of these problems educated her. In the last few years, she has worked in one movie after another, most of them low-budget, direct-to-video titles, but she has been working, and

(continued on page 61)

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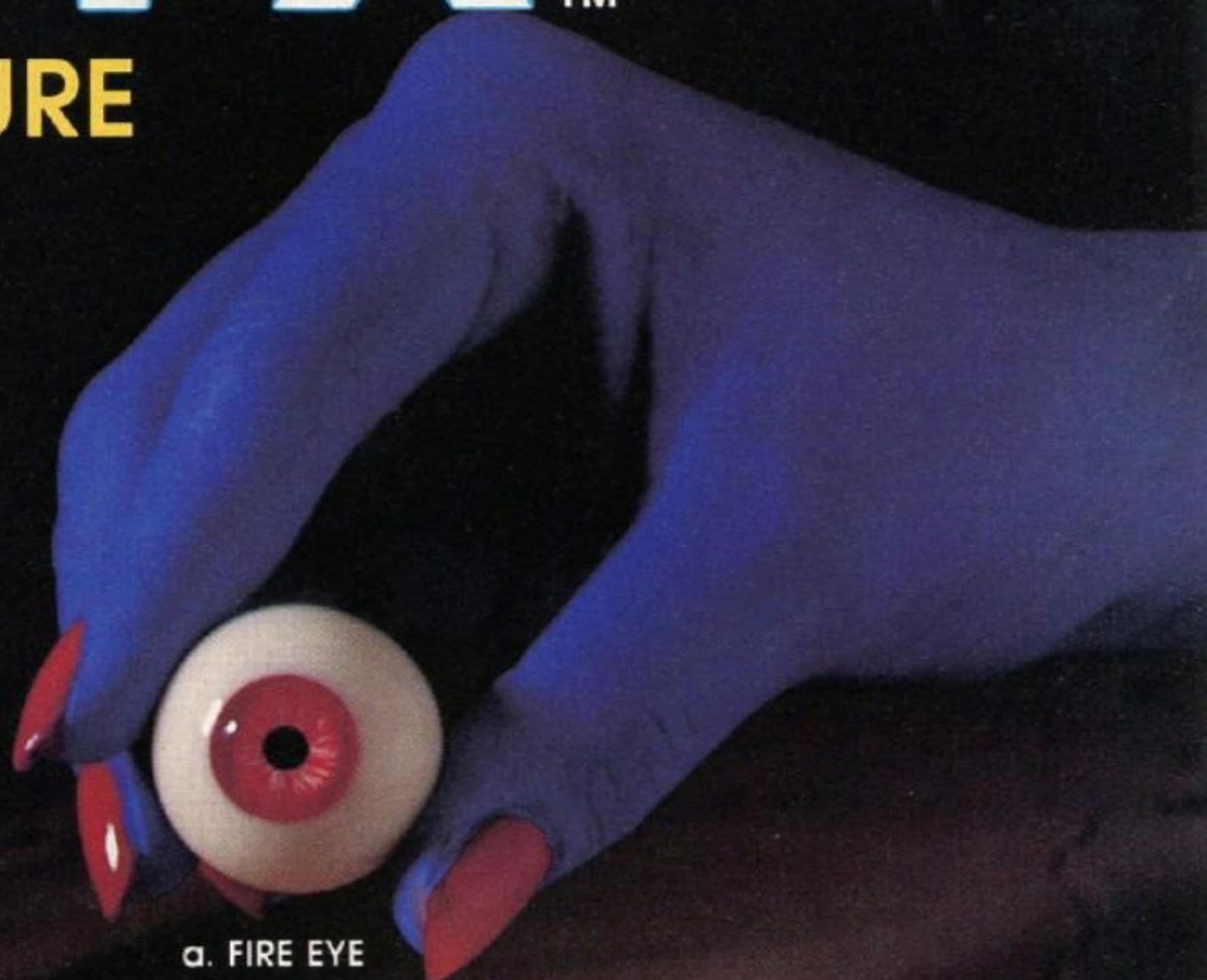
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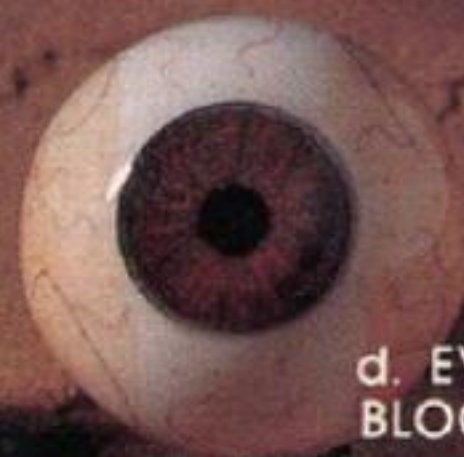
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Photo: JOHN CORTEZ

Tim Robbins ventures where no New Yorker dares to tread in *Jacob's Ladder*.

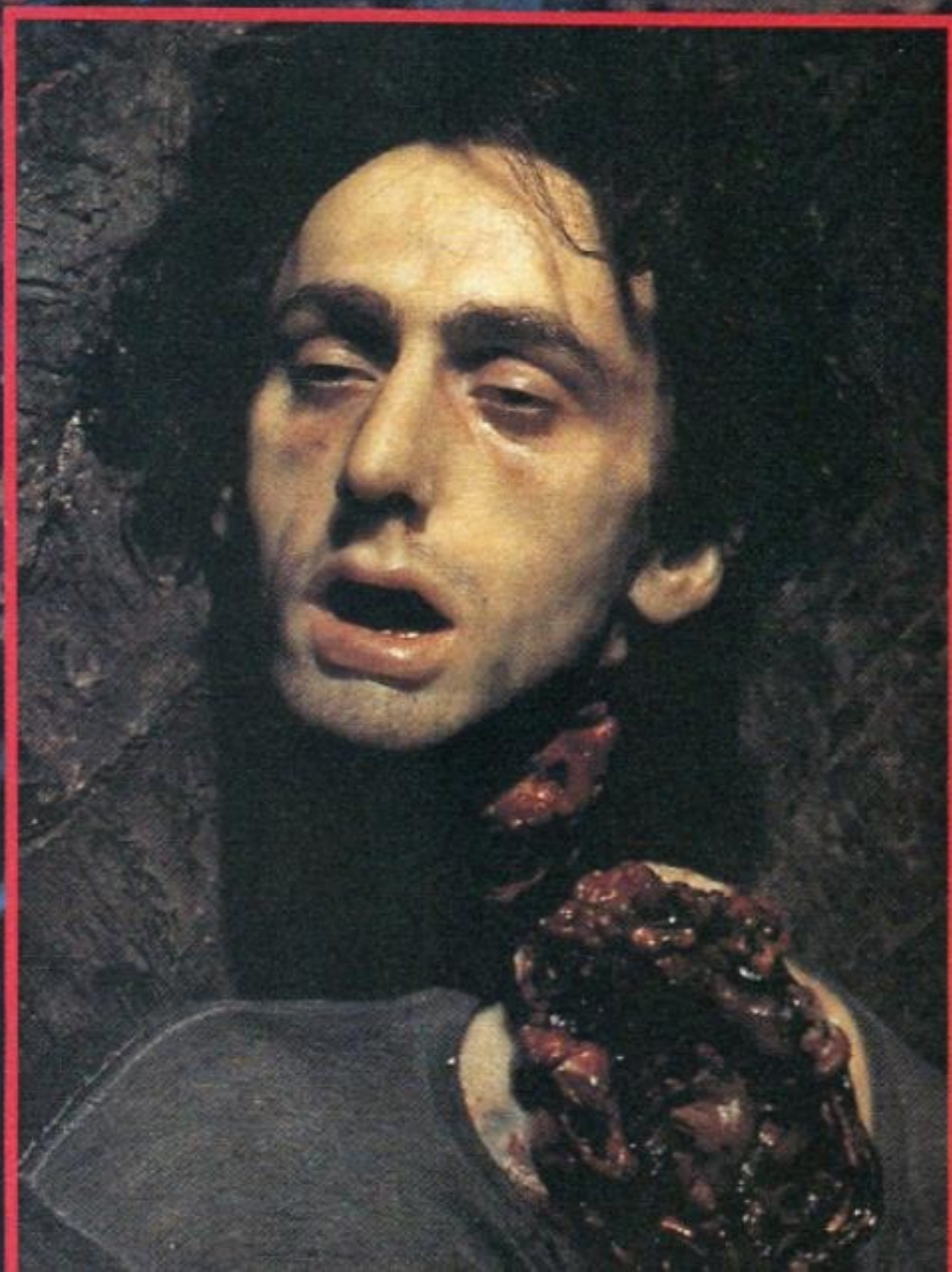
Climbing the Ladder of Success

After a pair of disappointments, screenwriter Bruce Joel Rubin sees his spiritual themes given just treatment in "Jacob's Ladder" and "Ghost."

By DANIEL SCHWEIGER

Scriptwriter Bruce Joel Rubin is possessed by the forces of heaven and hell, granting his everyman characters godlike abilities or sending them to unspeakable tortures. Possibly no other writer can boast of a firsthand acquaintance with the supernatural like Rubin's; his mystical quest across Asia years ago planted the seeds for a videotape of the afterlife for *Brainstorm*, a teenager with a robot's mind in *Deadly Friend*, and a yuppie who finds that power lies with becoming a *Ghost*. While Hollywood's budgetary walls have previously prevented Rubin's weirdest visions from completely overtaking our world, director Adrian Lyne has finally discovered a way to unleash *Jacob's Ladder*, the author's most

Though it's comforting to see a major studio and a big-name director playing with the red stuff, do you really think this shot will make the final cut?



horrifically challenging screenplay. Through the reworking of Rubin's demonic concepts with spectacular onscreen FX, "one of the 10 best unproduced scripts in Hollywood" has finally become reality after a decade on the shelf.

It took a nightmare to unlock *Jacob's* demons from the author's fevered imagination in 1979, as Rubin dreamed of being trapped in a dark subway station, evil phantoms close behind him. He immediately transposed this experience to the story of Jacob Singer (Tim Robbins), a Vietnam veteran still haunted by visions of a firefight in which he was bayoneted. During a subway ride home from his job as a mailman, Jacob sees a faceless bum sleeping across from him, a common sight except for the tail retreating between the man's legs. That's only the beginning of the endless nightmare of *Jacob's Ladder*, as demons torment him at every turn, nearly running him over and turning a party into an orgy of bloody flesh and phallic snakes. As Jacob desperately tries to comprehend these phantasms, he begins to think that he might really have died in the war, and that his new life as a husband and father is really an illusion created by hell on Earth.

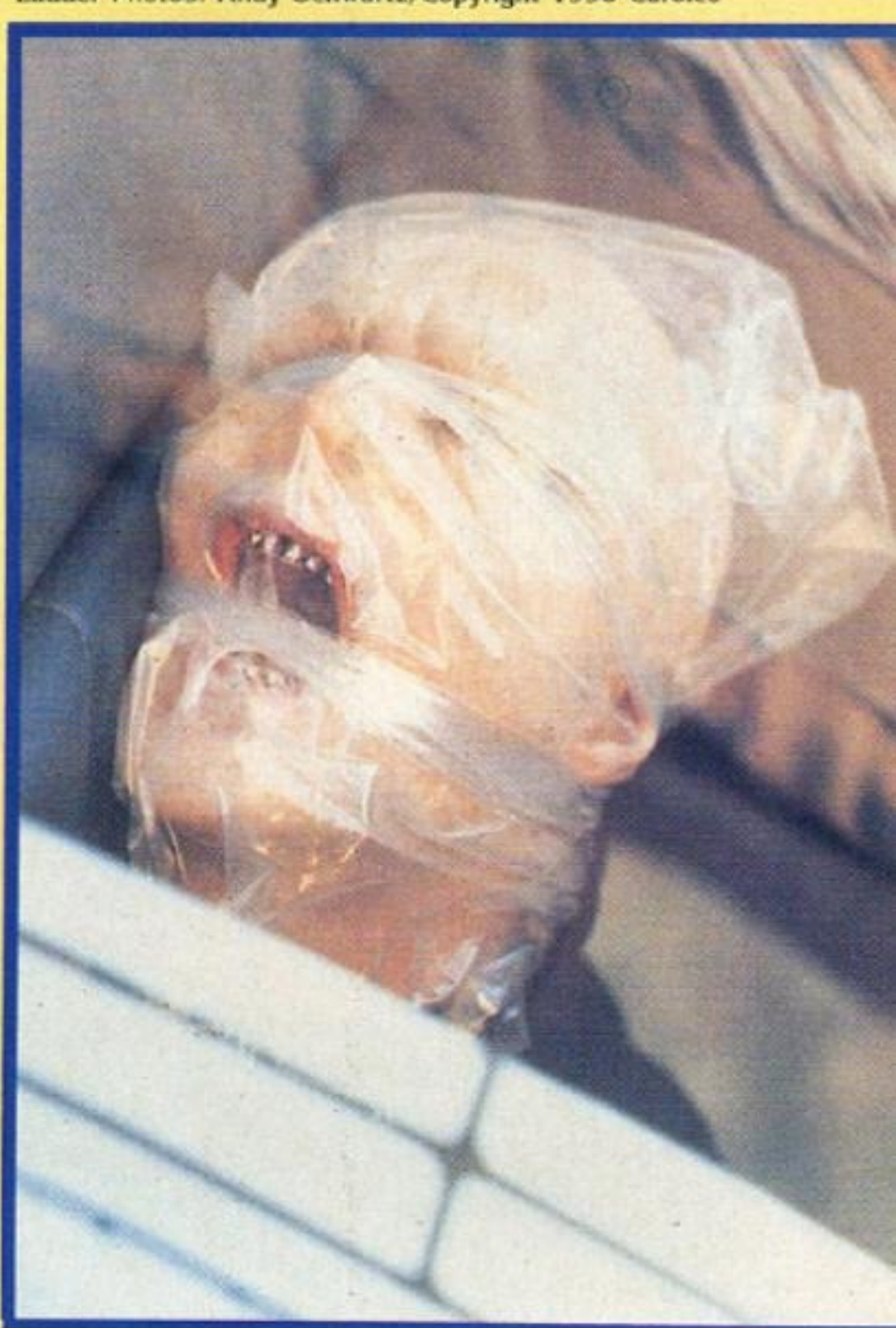
"I was terrified when I wrote the script, because I became Jacob," Rubin comments. "I only had a bare outline, and the story was constantly exploding inside of me. Sometimes I felt that I was falling through my chair and into a black pit. I worked up to 12 hours a day on it for over a year, and ended up becoming so obsessed that even my family couldn't get near me!" What emerged was a script that grafted the devil onto the country's Vietnam consciousness, a humanistic thriller that hit like a thunderbolt in a genre reserved at the time for psycho killers. But while *American Film* magazine urged for *Jacob's* cinematic realization, the script's daunting visuals made the industry shudder, as big budget FX were reserved for *Star Wars*-style space operas instead of adult horror.

Jacob's acclaim convinced Rubin that he could get the script into the hands of Ridley Scott, who'd just directed the hit movie of similar organic terror, *Alien*. "That film's look made Ridley my automatic first choice," Rubin enthuses, "and he took an equal interest in *Jacob's Ladder*. But despite his enthusiasm about the project, *Legend* came along and precluded his involvement. That sent *Jacob* back to the shelf for a decade, and while I did continue to get offers on it, I was

much happier to see it remain unproduced than have it turned into a bad movie."

Another graduate of Britain's atmosphere-drenched "commercial school" would finally climb up *Jacob's Ladder*, as Adrian Lyne used his profit-breaking success with *Fatal Attraction* to get Rubin's script off the ground. But this box office muscle would also allow him to reconceptualize the movie's demons. "My original idea was for a 20th-century man to be attacked by medieval creatures," Rubin explains, "and I used the paintings of Francis Bacon and Hieronymus Bosch for inspiration. Their bloody images were in a constant state of movement, and reality shifted with them as it does for Jacob. But Adrian didn't like the idea of horned creatures, since he was afraid that modern-day audiences wouldn't take them seriously. Classical devils have become jokes to us, so we based the creatures on the results of thalidomide. Here was a contemporary evil that deformed our flesh, and one that automatically horrifies people. Our trick in making that effective is showing its effects for only a split-second, so like Jacob, you're not sure whether the blood and twirling heads are there or not."

Rubin's steadfast belief in his own vision would repeatedly clash with Lyne's autocratic methods during the nine months of prepro-



Didn't his mom tell him never to play with plastic bags?

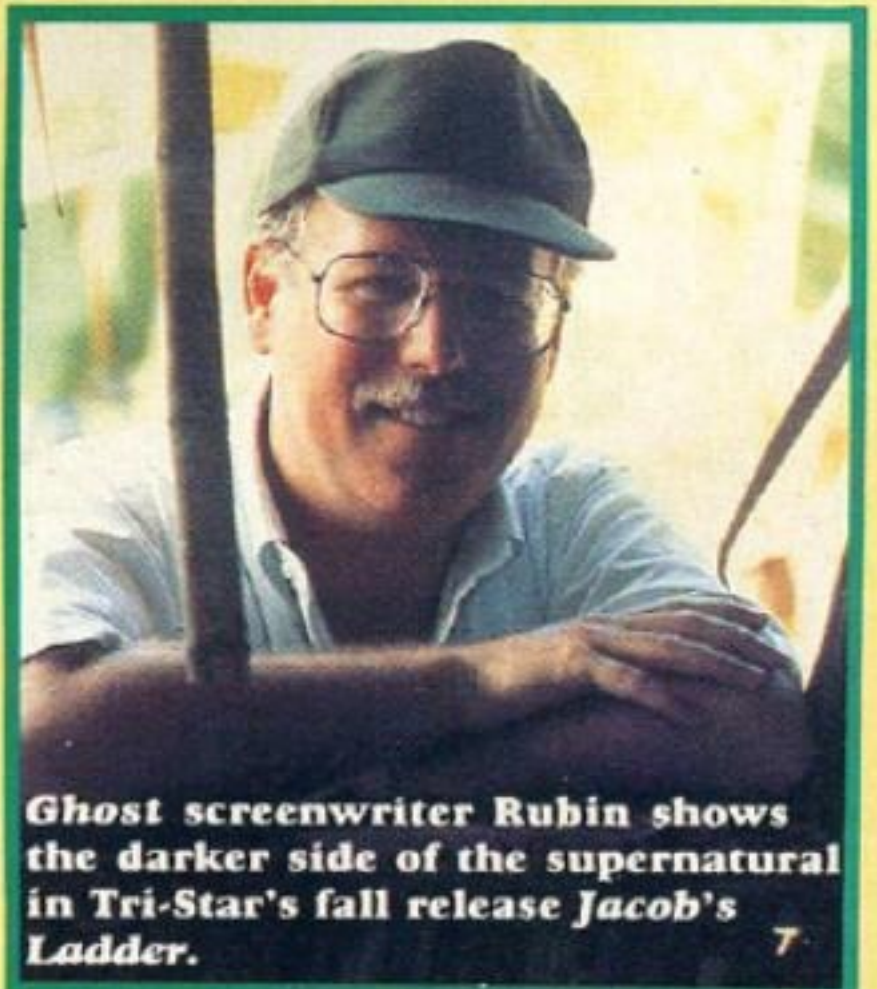
\$25 million budget, a decision which necessitated shooting the visuals on set in New York City. To believably realize the film's shape-shifting, Lyne brought in Gordon Smith,

"I was terrified when I wrote [*Jacob's Ladder*], because I became Jacob."

duction, as the script went through character additions and three major rewrites. "It was a constant battle between me and Adrian, and only the director can win in Hollywood," Rubin sighs. "The original screenplay had a more literary feel, since it was cinematic in my mind. I had a Spielbergian vision for *Jacob's Ladder*, with these grandiose scenes of heaven and hell. But if you ended up translating my effects word for word, the cost would've been \$30 million for the visuals alone! Adrian wanted to centralize things so the script would be shootable, and did a brilliant job reinterpreting many of the images I loved. He also wanted to put more emphasis on Jacob and family, which meant giving him a third son who has died and an angelic chiropractor buddy."

Lyne was determined to realize the full extent of Rubin's imagination while completing the film on its

who'd previously realized war and horror makeups in *Platoon*, *Near Dark* and *Graveyard Shift* (see page 34). "What's going to blow people away is that there isn't a single opti-



Ghost screenwriter Rubin shows the darker side of the supernatural in Tri-Star's fall release *Jacob's Ladder*.

cal effect in the movie," Rubin boasts. "Since Adrian made a point of accomplishing *Jacob's* apparitions before the camera, the whole film's become a magic show. You're constantly amazed by the sleight of hand. That makes you unsure whether Jacob is actually seeing these demons, or if they're springing from his mind. It's a matter of perceiving things normally, then having your notion of reality wiped away in the next second. It's a terrifying journey, and definitely the most intense film I've ever seen. But I'm not worried that audiences will turn away or end up being totally confused, because what's anchoring these visions is a human being. There's a desperate need to know what's happening to the character, and where these creatures are coming from. That's what propels the audience through the story."

With its claustrophobic subway and hellish beings, *Jacob's Ladder* will undoubtedly summon memories of *Ghost*, Rubin's far less morbid approach to the netherworld. "There are enormous similarities between the two films, and *Jacob's* will solve any problems people had with *Ghost*," he promises. "It's a more mature vision of my cosmology. I've always believed that life is made meaningful by the knowledge that it has an end. Most people live in ignorance of the fact. Death is what gives life its meaning, poignancy and value. I really believe it's a transitional point to another existence."

The quest for this spiritual truth would mark a change in Rubin's life. After attending the NYU film school in the early '60s with such students as Brian De Palma and Martin Scorsese and working as a film editor for NBC, Rubin decided in 1966 to take a magical mystery tour across the Eurasian continent. "After reading about Buddhism and Eastern mysticism, I finally decided to go there to experience it," recalls Rubin. "So I started out in Greece with a stack of books so heavy that only a mule could carry them, and began an enormously powerful journey through Turkey, Pakistan and India. Watching their cultures blend really changed my life. It made me see us as one human race, and I came out knowing I was going to be a writer, and that I'd have enough to write about for the rest of my life."

Infused with this Karmic sensibility, Rubin came back to America to make *Dionysus in '69* with Brian De Palma, a cult film that would be his only realized feature project for 14 years. While working on film research and industrial projects, Rubin thought up several bizarre

projects before arriving at *The George Dunlap Tape*, about a mind-blowing brain machine that can transfer every sensation from sex to death. "Hollywood's tendency was to water spirituality down, since most of their writers didn't come from a deep enough place to explore those themes with integrity," Rubin comments. "So Philip Messina and I came up with this extraordinary depiction of a higher life, one which touched a cosmic reality that no other film had attempted."

With props already made and a New York cast transported to Indiana University, *The George Dunlap Tape* was set to roll as a low-budget feature in 1976, until its financing was pulled at the last minute. "I was miserable," Rubin recalls. "My wife thought she'd support me as a teacher, then I'd get these fat checks from Hollywood for my great screenplays. But I never saw a dime. I was so far outside their system that I couldn't get in the door, and I was envious of Brian and Martin. But I was still proud of them, because I saw that if they could make it, so could I."

Rubin's waiting would pay off in a dubious manner when FX wizard Douglas (Blade Runner) Trumbull optioned his script and turned it

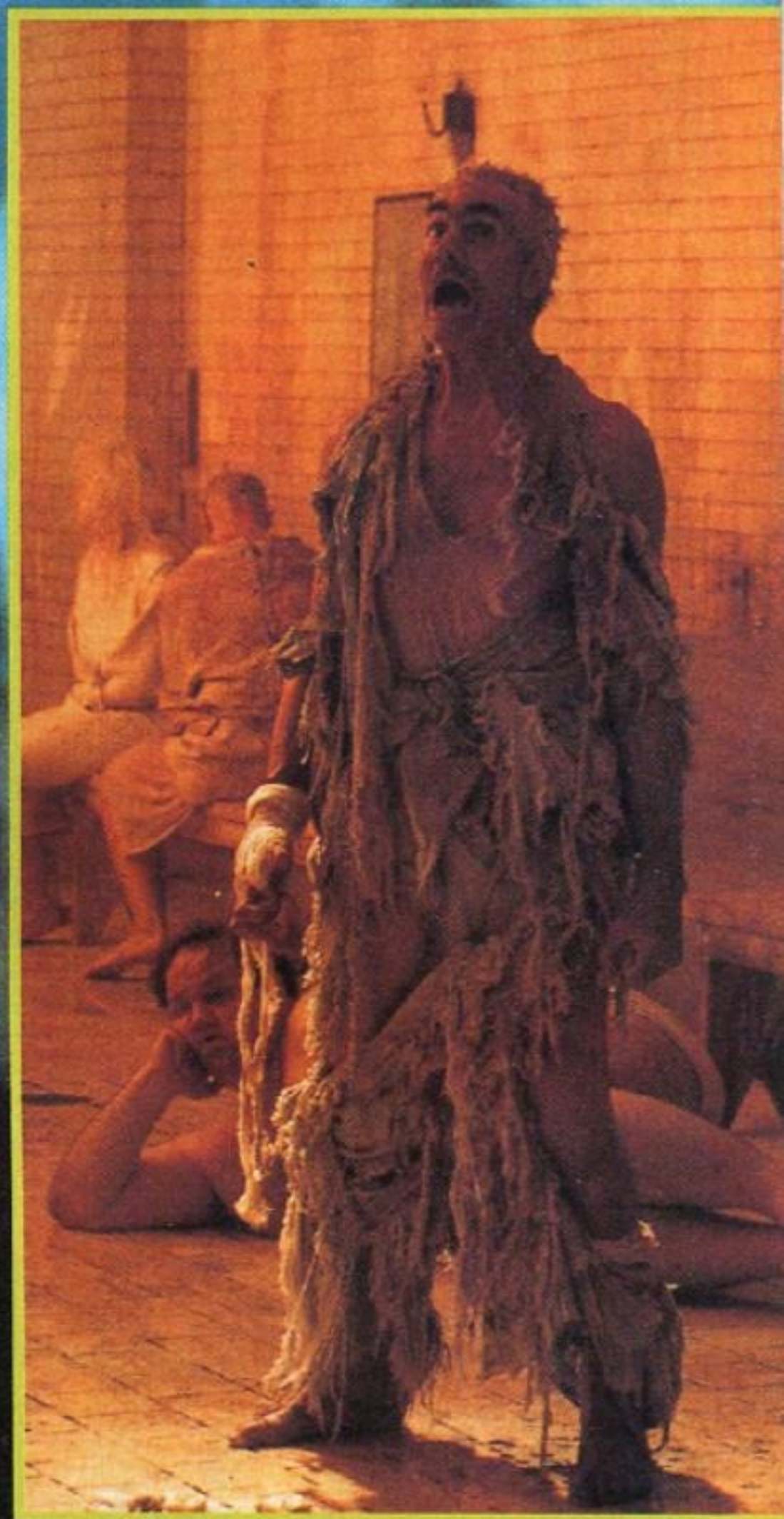
into 1983's ill-fated *Brainstorm*. "I couldn't imagine a greater horror story, from Natalie Wood dying during the filming to getting my story raped by studio heads who didn't understand it," frowns Rubin. "Although I have enormous respect for Doug, there was still a certain amount of betrayal. However, there was also enough left of my story to allow me to take credit for it. Every Hollywood writer learns that the best way to control their material is to direct it. Movie scripts aren't like theater, where they can't change a word of dialogue without your say. In film, anything can be remolded. So if you have a deep personal attachment to the material, be prepared to have it eviscerated. No one will have to apologize, because they've al-

ready paid for your material! It's a horrendous process."

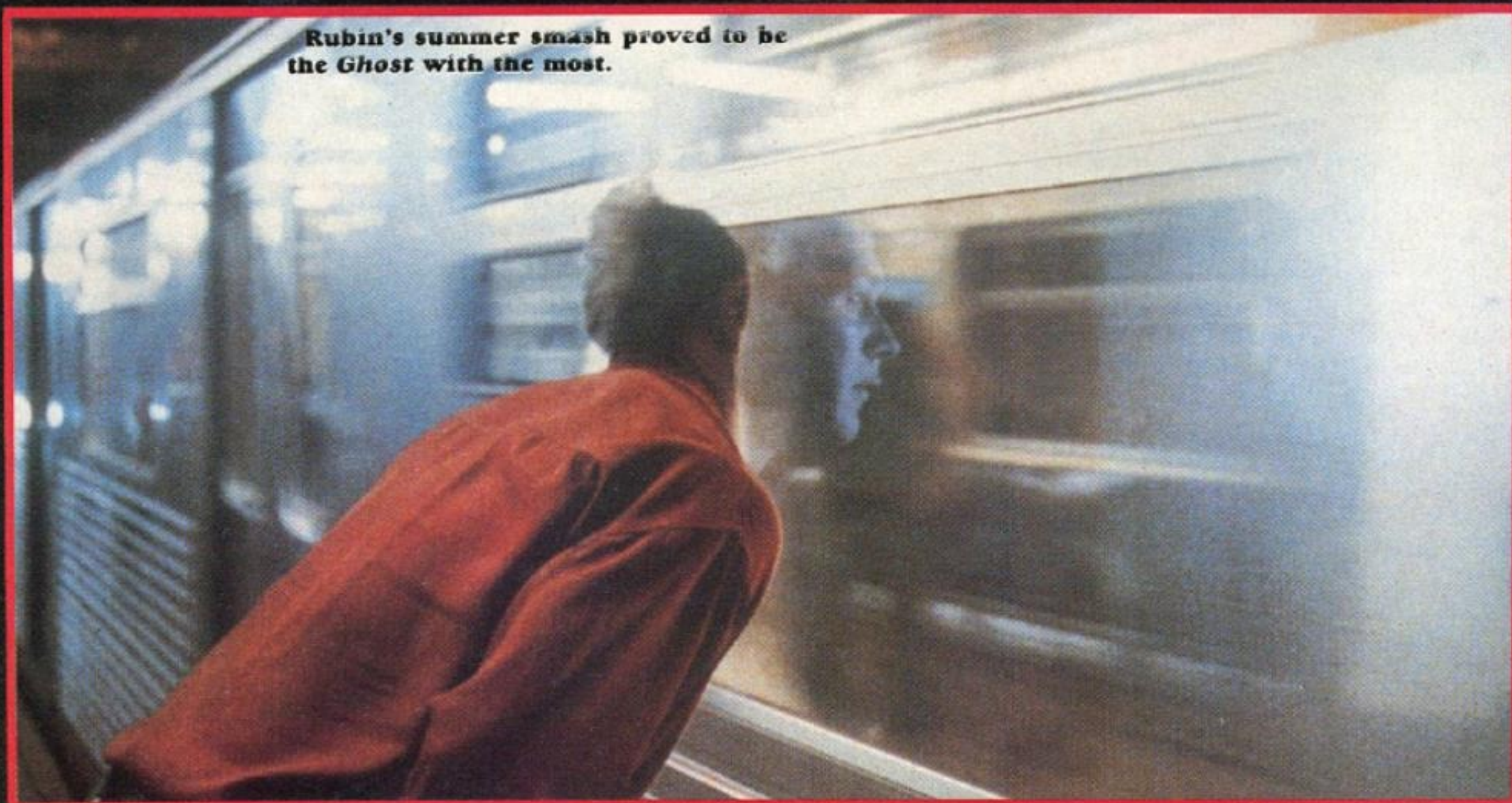
Wes Craven's *Deadly Friend* would turn into another horror show for Rubin, as his tenderly dark love story (based on Diana Henstell's novel *Friend*) was changed into a ludicrous dead-teen flick, with a lethally abused young girl getting her personality switched with a Frankenstein-in-training's toy robot. "I was a gun for hire, and really tried to write a deep and heartfelt movie out of it. But then we

(continued on page 54)

"If you ended up translating my effects word for word, the cost would've been \$30 million for the visuals alone."



Jan (Basket Case 2) Saint does a roadshow performance of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.



Rubin's summer smash proved to be the *Ghost* with the most.

DIRECTOR OF THE LIVING DEAD

FX master Tom Savini finally achieved his dream—directing a feature film—and took on the challenge of remaking a classic.

By DAVID KUEHLS

It's the witching hour on a cold, dark night in rural western Pennsylvania. Tom Savini stands at the top of a hill in a clean, well-lit space right in the middle of a busy set. Crew members haul equipment back and forth like worker ants as Savini, in leather jacket and black pants (with a black ponytail halfway down his back), answers questions and gives his two cents' worth on just about everything going on around him. The man whom Dario Argento calls "the vortex of the mind" has his cranium full directing his first feature film, the remake of *Night of the Living Dead*. After talking with Savini, your Fango correspondent gets the impression that it's a job he wouldn't trade for any other.

FANGORIA: How does it feel, director Savini?

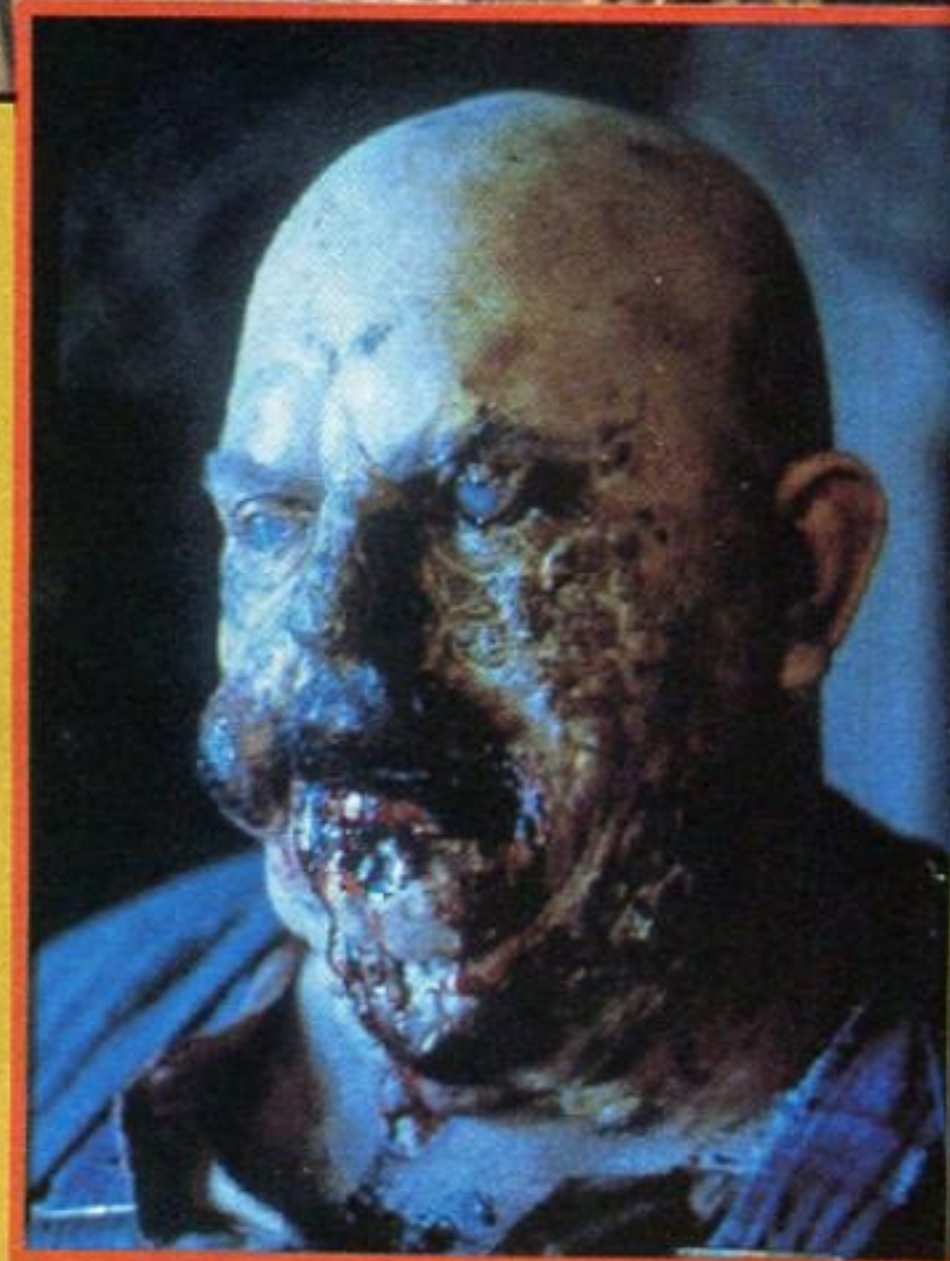
Tom Savini: I hate "how do you feel" questions, but it's been intoxicating. I remember walking into George's office in 1967, when I was in college. I wanted to do the special effects for the original *Night of the Living Dead*. In fact, I'd met George six years earlier when I was still in high school. I went in for a screen test for a film that never got made

Savini contemplates the nihilistic existentialism of a crowbar to the head.

[*The Whine of the Fawn*], and so six years later I came into the office for *Night of the Living Dead*, and George remembered my full name. That really impressed me. But anyway, back in 1967 I had enlisted in the Army on the hold program, which meant that they had 140 days during which they might call you in. I was called before the movie got rolling, so I didn't get to do the effects. Just last week I was riding to the set and thinking about all the problems I was encountering on the shoot. And I reflected on that day in 1967 when I was going in there as a college kid trying to do the effects for the original movie—and now here I am directing the remake. Suddenly, my thoughts were, "Look how far I've come!" So any problems I could possibly have when I think of how far I've come with George are inconsequential. I wish I had more time to enjoy it. All the makeup effects, stunts and acting have been geared toward being in control of everything as director.

Fang: This is a remake, and yet certain parts of the storyline are different. Can you clue us in on any of the differences?

Savini: The storyline is basically the same, but there're lots of...Wait a



One of the many special living dead makeups was the oh-so-ugly Cancer Zombie.

minute! I don't want to say anything about the plot. No one will ever hear me give anything away about the storyline—even to Fango! I don't believe that people should know what it's about before they see it. What's the point? It's almost like if the movie were showing, and we'd stop the movie halfway through, close the curtains, and have some guy come out and say, "Well, I'm going to tell you what happens." People would throw tomatoes at the guy. They would kill him right then and there. I don't want to do that on the printed page. But I'll just say that there are plenty of surprises. We're counting



Is that any way to treat a Fango coverboy?

the same. Physically, they look the same except for Barbara. And that was my intention—I did not want to build too big a wall between this film and the original. Also, with the characters *looking* basically the same, I hope I can lull you into the same sort of mood, and then catch you off guard with a twist or two. This picture is much more intense.

Also, the look is different. It's film noir, but in color. And the movie is periodless. It could be set anytime; we weren't necessarily trying for 1990. That's because we didn't want to upset the trilogy.

Fang: What about the zombie makeup? Are you overseeing that?

Savini: At the beginning of the shoot I expressed my feelings on the makeup, and Everett [Burrell] and John [Vulich] have taken it from there. One of the reasons I hired

"I do not consider this picture a remake. I think of it as a retelling of the story. We are twisting things around."

Photos: Copyright 1990 Columbia Pictures

on the fact that most people know the story, know what's going on. And by counting on that we can manipulate them into expecting to see a certain thing happen, though it may or may not. Also, 60 minutes into this film you're getting, in a way, another story. So it's a bit of a sequel, too. But I'm not going to reveal any of that.

Fang: OK, then, how do you improve upon a classic? For many people this is like remaking *Citizen Kane*, and you're bound to get criticized for it—whether this movie is good or not.

Savini: First of all, yes, the original is a classic. But if you tried to premiere it today it would not work. It is a classic in that it had its time, and now it is our time. As far as remaking a classic goes, it's not like you can't do it well. Someone wrote recently that "Tom Savini is doing the ill-advised remake of *Night of the Living Dead*." I just don't buy that. Did anyone say when they were remaking *The Thing* that it was an ill-advised remake? To me, that remake was a great movie; it's one of my top 10 favorites. And besides, I do not consider this picture a remake. I think of it as a *retelling* of the story. It is not a remake verbatim. We are twisting and turning things around. Yes, the characters are all

Savini protégés John Vulich and Everett Burrell worked to create the most realistic and disturbing corpses possible.

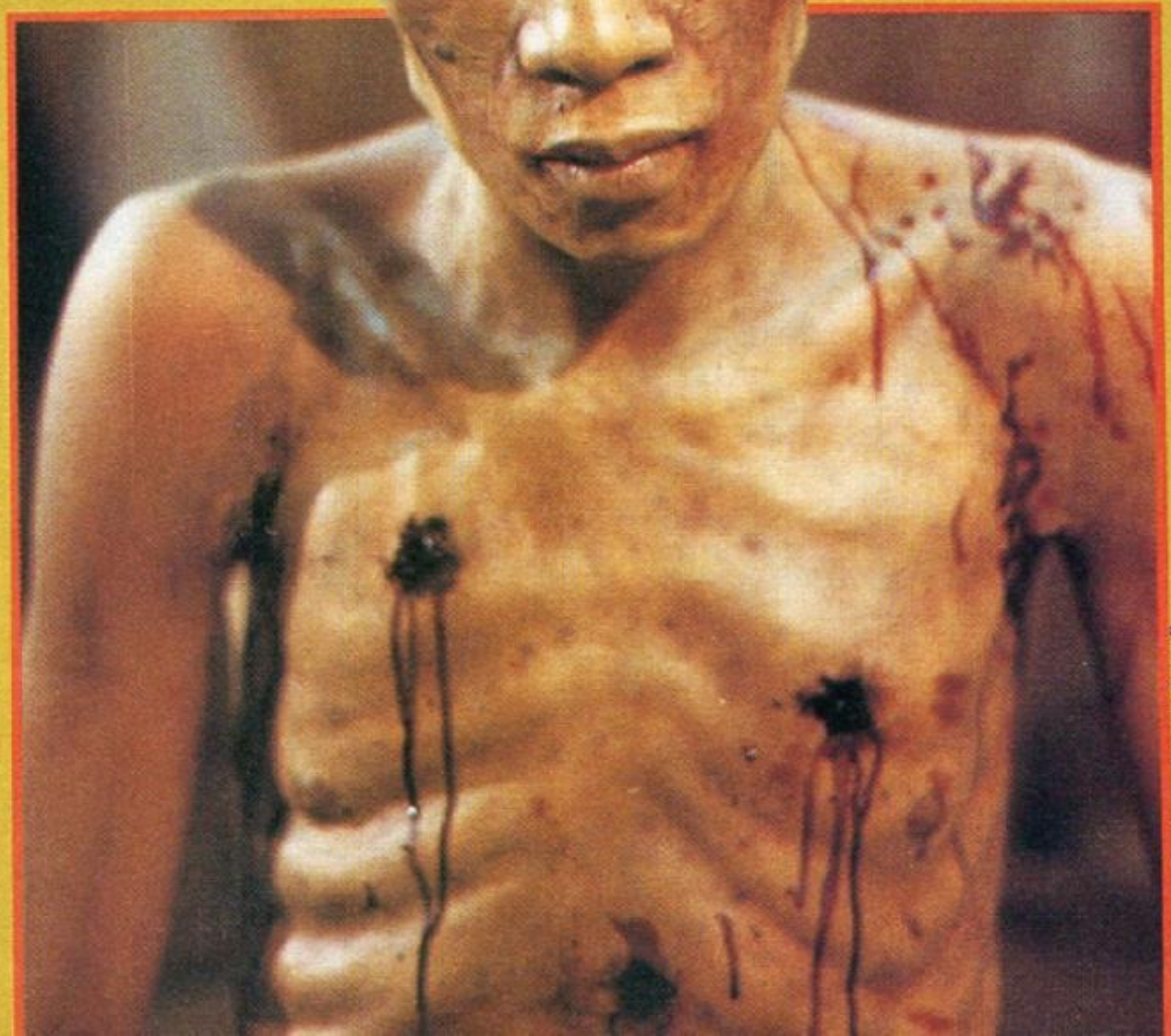
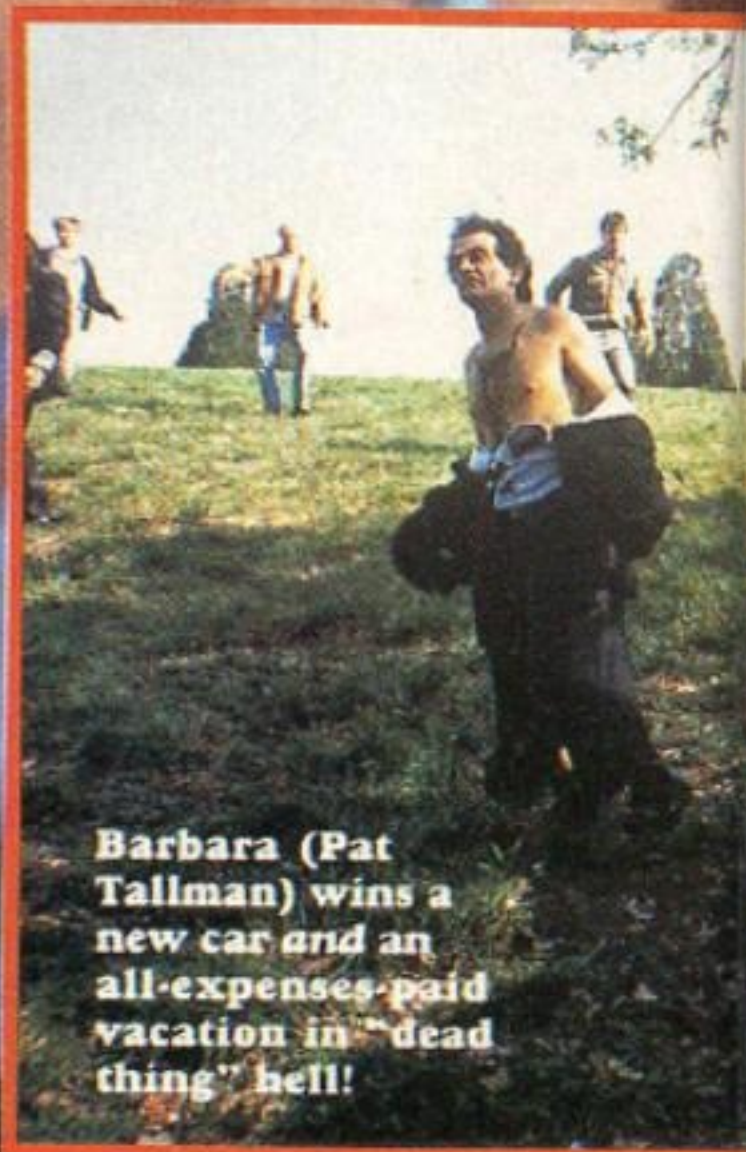


Photo: Courtesy Everett Burrell

Never use a rifle
as a crutch.



Barbara (Pat
Tallman) wins a
new car and an
all-expenses-paid
vacation in "dead
thing" hell!

Don't worry: The living dead are just as frightened of us as we are of them.

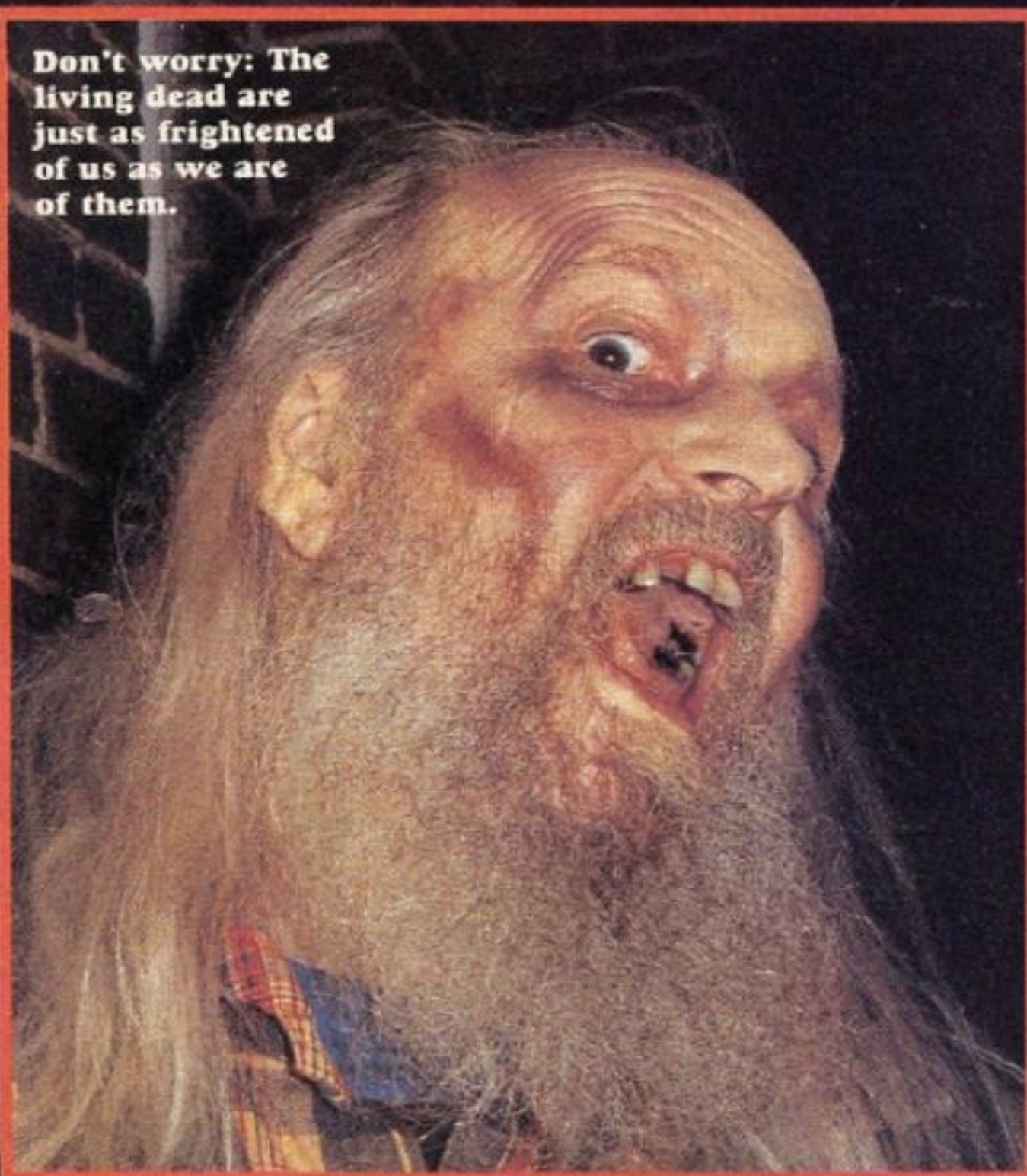


Photo: Courtesy Dennis Daniel

"I wanted the zombies to look as realistic as possible. To me, they're not even zombies."

This undead housewife will make you think twice about sleeping around.



them was because of the stuff they were saying about the look of the zombies. We were talking about that months and months ago, while we were filming *Two Evil Eyes*. For the zombie look, I wanted to take cadavers and mechanize them. You cannot do that, of course, but that is the look I was after, and that is the look they are giving me. My thoughts are that the zombies should have been dead for just a couple of days. And they're not all going to look the same. They died at different times, in different ways, and perhaps whatever it is that's causing them to come back to life is having more of an effect on some than others.

Basically, I wanted the zombies to look as realistic as possible. To me, they're not even zombies. We tried not to call them zombies, but we couldn't find another word. "Dead thing?" "Mechanized cadaver?" In fact, the script only has the word "zombie" in it once. It says "dead thing" or "dead person" instead. And I thought, "Hmmm. Maybe George has got something here." And we started to do this little underground thing on the set among those in the know. Anybody who said the "Z word" wasn't in the club. Another reason I don't call them zombies is that "zombie" implies Haiti and voodoo, and that's not what this story is about. It's scarier to think of real dead people coming back to life.

Besides, are zombie-zombies scary anymore? In *Return of the*

Living Dead a comedy was made out of them. And in Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, they dance. The reason that the classic monsters of yesterday—Frankenstein, Dracula and the Wolf Man—are no longer scary is because they teamed them up with Abbott and Costello. And in a way it's sort of happened to zombies too. Therefore, you won't see any *Thriller*-type zombies in this movie. This is real. We have cancer victims with huge bulbs on their faces and radiation scars. Things like that. But getting back to your original question, as far as overseeing the makeup, Everett and John know me so well that I never have to say anything. I never have to say, "Shit, this is not what I want." Instead, I am always saying, "You guys are the best."

Fang: Reportedly, you did some zombie makeup tests for this movie while working on *Two Evil Eyes*.

Savini: You must be talking about the Ramy Zada zombie. Yes, we did some experiments with color and other things. But that was different. The zombie in that film had been dead for three weeks.

Fang: Will *Night* be R-rated?

Savini: Yes, I have to deliver an R picture by contract. There are, however, certain things we're trying to get away with.

Fang: Such as?

Savini: I won't tell. But I hope the ratings board sees that we're not going the *Texas Chainsaw II* route and making a bloodfest. Also, I handle women differently in this movie. The deaths are shadows on the wall or off-camera. To me, killing women and children onscreen is exploitation. I didn't write any of those movies that I worked on that featured that stuff. And I'm not saying that those who did are weird or anything. But to me it's pornography when you get in close for the death of a woman or child. This is not a splatter film. In most splatter films you *want* the characters to die, so who cares if you show it. The *Friday the 13th* movies are full of mindless twits. You root against them. But not this film; it has some great characters.

Fang: You picked Pat Tallman as Barbara, who is essentially the hero. She's sort of a female Rambo. Why Tallman?

Savini: Who told you that about Barbara's character? He's fired! No, I'm kidding. As for Patty, she was the only choice as far as I was concerned. She did a stunt for me in the "Inside the Closet" episode of *Tales from the Darkside*, and I really wanted her to be the star. I got resis-

(continued on page 61)

THE VIDEO EYE of Dr. Cyclops

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STEPFATHER II (HBO):

Imitation, they say, is the sincerest form of flattery. In Hollywood, it's also the quickest and most expedient way to make a quick buck. *Stepfather II* is largely just a retread of the 1987 sleeper hit, more of a loose remake than a sequel, but it's also slick and well-produced, and delivers the sadistic goods. Terry O'Quinn repeats his *Stepfather* role as the mild, affable "family man" who marries into existing households, then butchers the lot of them at the first whiff of domestic discord. *II* opens with O'Quinn an inmate at a mental hospital (local authorities have taken a dim view of his antics), but he takes his cue from Michael Myers and murders his way out in a well-calculated daylight break. Setting up shop as a psychologist (sans credentials) in a residential neighborhood, O'Quinn's eye is caught by a recent divorcée (Meg Foster) with a

young son. He woos and wins the pretty Meg, undeterred by bothersome details like having to (permanently) dispose of her belligerent ex as well as her nosy best friend. But in a classic climax which brings new meaning to the phrase "prenuptial jitters," Foster finally sees through her homicidal husband-to-be (practically on the altar steps!) and both parties take off the gloves in a great showdown scene. *Stepfather II* may not be up to the standard set by its predecessor, but it's nicely self-contained, paces itself well and has plenty of the makes-you-wince realistic violence which helped the first one become such a favorite. While the plot is derivative, this is compensated for in small ways: some clever twists, more of an emphasis on the black-humor potential of the situations, and O'Quinn himself (still in fine form; he's one actor who seems destined to go on to bigger things). And the door, *Stepfather* fans may be happy to find, has been left open for a *Stepfather III*.

NIGHT CALLER FROM OUTER SPACE (SONY):

Also known by the more sensational title *Blood Beast from Outer Space*, this 1965 black and white British cheapie (whose opening title reads simply *The Night Caller*), starts off as a talky programmer, but soon degenerates (or is that regenerates?) into a goofy take on the Mars Needs Women theme that characterized so much '60s



sci-fi. John Saxon stars as one of a team of scientists investigating the crashing of a meteorite in the English countryside. (In true low-budget fashion, said space junk resembles nothing more than a glow-in-the-dark soccer ball.) Much pseudoscientific jargon concerning fluctuating magnetic fields, input ratios and powerful energy valves later, we find out the sphere is actually a matter transmitter sent to Earth from one of the moons of Jupiter. The principal form of matter transmitted is a scaly character named Medra, who sounds a lot like the guy who does voice-overs for those Oxy-10 commercials. After some half-baked analysis, Saxon ties the appearance of the sphere in with the disappearance of 23 girls in the London area. When it turns out all the chicks were drawn to an ad in *Bikini Girl* magazine, the movie takes a turn for the nutty. Medra's motives are explained in a dumb closing soliloquy that makes this flick yet another misguided, socially-conscious "message" thriller. The movie

is pretty slow for the first hour, jammed with plenty of dialogue and almost no action. Stiff Saxon, however, is at his pained best in a rare early good-guy role. *Fawly Towers* fans: Watch for a cameo by Ballard Berkeley, "Major" from that brilliant comedy series. The great schmaltzy title song was written by Albert Hague, the kindly old music teacher of *Fame* fame. The incidental music sounds like it's from a Carol Burnett soap opera parody.



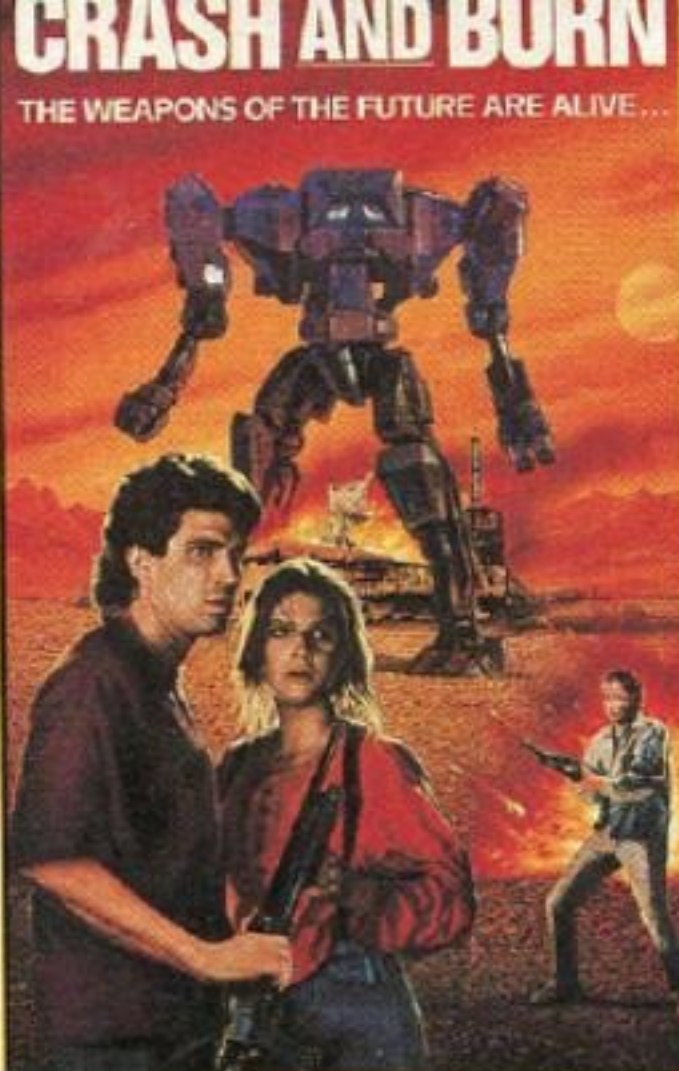
THE AMITYVILLE CURSE (VIDMARK):

Direct-to-video fodder is not in itself a bad thing. Boring, unoriginal direct-to-video fodder is. Here, from our neighbors to the North (Canada, that is), is the fourth (or is it fifth? Is anyone really counting?) movie with the money-making Amityville monicker. Based on a book by Hans Holzer, this bland, you've-seen-it-all-before-and-done-better haunted house picture is just a cynical cash-in that doesn't

even bother trying to entertain. For the record, five obnoxious and unappealing characters move into a big, cheap house on Long Island (a Long Island, the movie would have you believe, with mountains on the horizon and power provided by Con Ed, not LILCO). Before the quintet can even start to wonder why the place was so inexpensive, fireplaces unexpectedly shoot flames, spiders run around and doors slam by themselves. Also, plenty of name products are steered toward the camera, suggesting how this movie was financed. In an odd move, director Tom Berry allows one of the leads to inexplicably wear a scarf indoors. But neither unexplained quirks like this nor the senseless solo wanderings of the stock characters succeed in distracting you from wondering, "Why am I watching this?" Jan Rubes, a decent actor who should know better, is featured in the film's prologue and denouement and adds a touch of class to this production that it doesn't deserve. If they must check this movie out, gore fans would do well to skip to the last 10 minutes of the picture, thus avoiding the 80 minutes of routine garbage that precede them.

CRASH AND BURN

(PARAMOUNT): His Empire may have fallen, but that hasn't stopped Charles Band from making more hit-or-miss genre pics under his Full Moon Entertainment banner. His latest is a needlessly complex, futuristic cat-and-mouse thriller that tries to densely pack a whole lot of story into 85 minutes. The result is a plot that is mostly just dense. It concerns Tyson Keen (Paul Giamatti), a courier for the government communications system Uni-Com, who is sent to deliver supplies to a private television station in the California "wasteland." Ralph Waite (the father from *The Waltons*) plays the curmudgeonly proprietor of the station, whose mysterious murder propels a muddled series of events involving homicidal "synthoids," a deadly



computer virus and a revolutionary underground. The film also features a brief appearance by what seems to be one of FX specialist David Allen's Transformer-inspired giant robots from the Band-produced, Stuart Gordon-directed *Robot Jox* (which reportedly will soon see release). The stop-motion FX are indeed cool to behold, but the minuscule screen time afforded the robot makes you wonder why they bothered. The regular Band crew (including ace cinematographer Mac Ahlberg) is on hand for this production, and the picture, while extremely talky, is taut and watchable. Greg Cannom's gore FX are topnotch and include one real gross-out involving an amputated arm. But the person who steals the show is *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II*'s Bill Moseley, who once again does a great psycho turn, this time resembling a replicant Willem Dafoe.

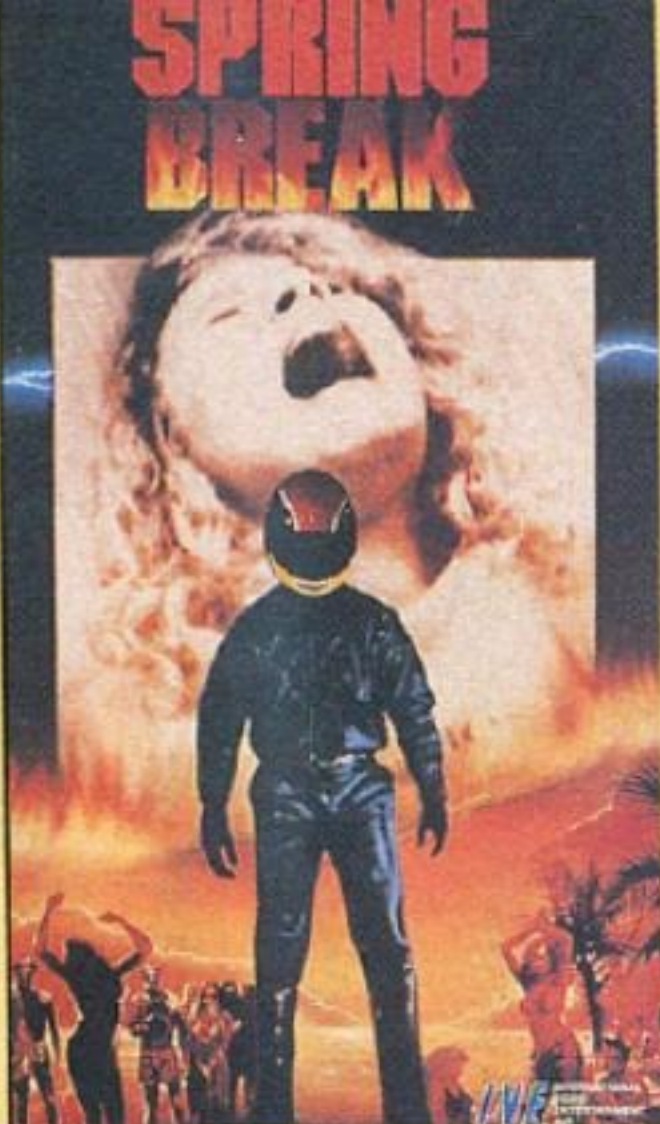
TRANSYLVANIA TWIST

(MGM/UA): Jim Wynorski, the poor man's Roger Corman, strikes (out) again with *Transylvania Twist*, a horror spoof done in the anything-goes style of *The Kentucky Fried Movie* and *Airplane!* *Twist* has a decent cast who play it broadly in the spirit of bawdy fun, but the film is so forced and indulgently in-jokey that it's guaranteed to keep you wearing a straight face from beginning to end. "Funnyman" Steve Altman is a wisecracking doofus searching on his librarian uncle's behalf for a stolen book

on demonism. Altman tracks down the thief's rock-star daughter (Teri Copley) just as she learns that her long-missing dad has died in Transylvania. So off they go to the distant land of phantoms, where they find a spooky castle, Robert Vaughn as a bombastic baddie, his three vampiric daughters (Patty, Maxine and Laverne), a dimensional gateway wherein lurks the *It Conquered the World* beastie, Angus Scrimm as a sinister servant and various other cast members (like Howard Morris and Steve Franken) struggling to keep their heads above water. Unencumbered by wit or style, R.J. Robertson's script lampoons every horror cliché on the books; the film is filled with topical references that won't date well and obscure homages to flicks like *The Premature Burial*, *The Haunted Palace*, etc., which will mean nothing to the age group for which *Transylvania Twist* is geared. The film *does* have that kitschy cast (which also includes Jay Robinson, Deanna Lund, Brinke Stevens and Forry Ackerman), an almost-clever re-edited scene of Boris Karloff from *The Terror* and special guest appearances by Jason, Leatherface, Freddy and Pinhead, so like most barrels of rotten fruit, one or two good things can be found inside. But there are just too many better vampire spoofs around (*The Fearless Vampire Killers* and *Love at First Bite*, just to scratch the surface) to squander 82 minutes on anything as shallow as *Transylvania Twist*.

WELCOME TO SPRING BREAK

(IVE): The title makes the film sound like a Porky's-style romp, but it's really a horror/revenge thriller that's appealing in a tacky kind of way. It begins where most movies end, with a burly Hell's Angel-type being led to the Florida electric chair; still shouting his innocence, he's strapped, capped and zapped. Later, when his body vanishes from the cemetery, the local doctor (Michael Parks) wonders aloud whether his death pronouncement wasn't

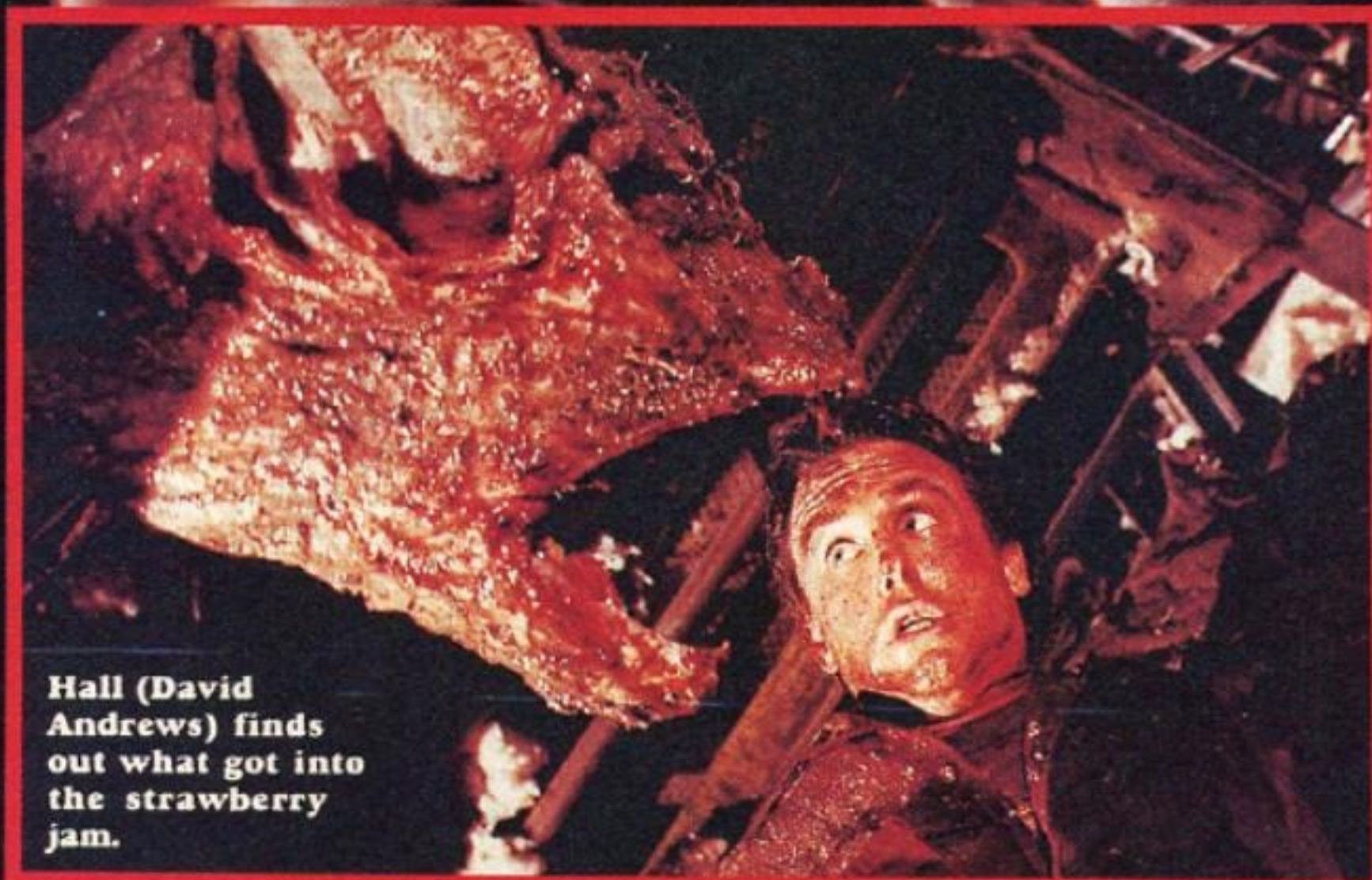


a bit premature. All of this somber early exposition makes way for scenes of spring break, as thousands of young hellraisers hit the beaches for a little sun, surf, suds and sex. But, determined to spoil their fun, a mysterious biker (his face hidden by a dark helmet visor) suddenly makes the scene, tooling around on a chopper rigged to electrocute passengers, shoving live wires down people's throats and just making a general nuisance of himself. Is it the executed cyclist, returned from the grave for vengeance? Is it the sadistic chief of police (genre icon John Saxon), or maybe the puritanical minister (Lance LeGault)? Will the morose hero and his barmaid beloved live long enough to find out? Is it worth an hour and a half of your time waiting to see? For the not-too-fussy horror fan the answer is definitely yes: *Welcome to Spring Break* does a colorful job of delivering the low-budget goods, with plenty of messy killings, beach bunnies in teeny-weeny bikinis, a wet T-shirt contest and a respectable cast which plays it straight down the middle. The mystery is fairly transparent and there are a few lulls where all you can think is that nothing is happening, but by and large the plot keeps moving and the Florida spring break setting is an agreeably new and cheesy backdrop for this type of slasher shenanigans. Possibly misfiled under "Comedy" in some vidstores, it's a good, ghoulish whodunit.

OH, RATS! IT'S GRAVEYARD SHIFT

Hundreds of rodents and a monster named Arlene provide the chills in the latest Stephen King story to hit the screen.

By RODNEY A. LABBE



Hall (David Andrews) finds out what got into the strawberry jam.



Pity the poor rat—he is desperately in need of a good publicist. From the Black Plague to the Pied Piper of Hamelin, rats have been portrayed as foul creatures, vermin prowling the sewers, fodder for laboratory experiments and socially acceptable only as caged white “pets.” Their on-screen persona has followed suit: filmmakers have gleefully solidified the image of rat as villain, the most notorious example being Willard’s little rodent friend, Ben. Our rodentophobia has been actively encouraged for years. Even the tamest of rats cannot be fully trusted...they *do* have fangs, after all.

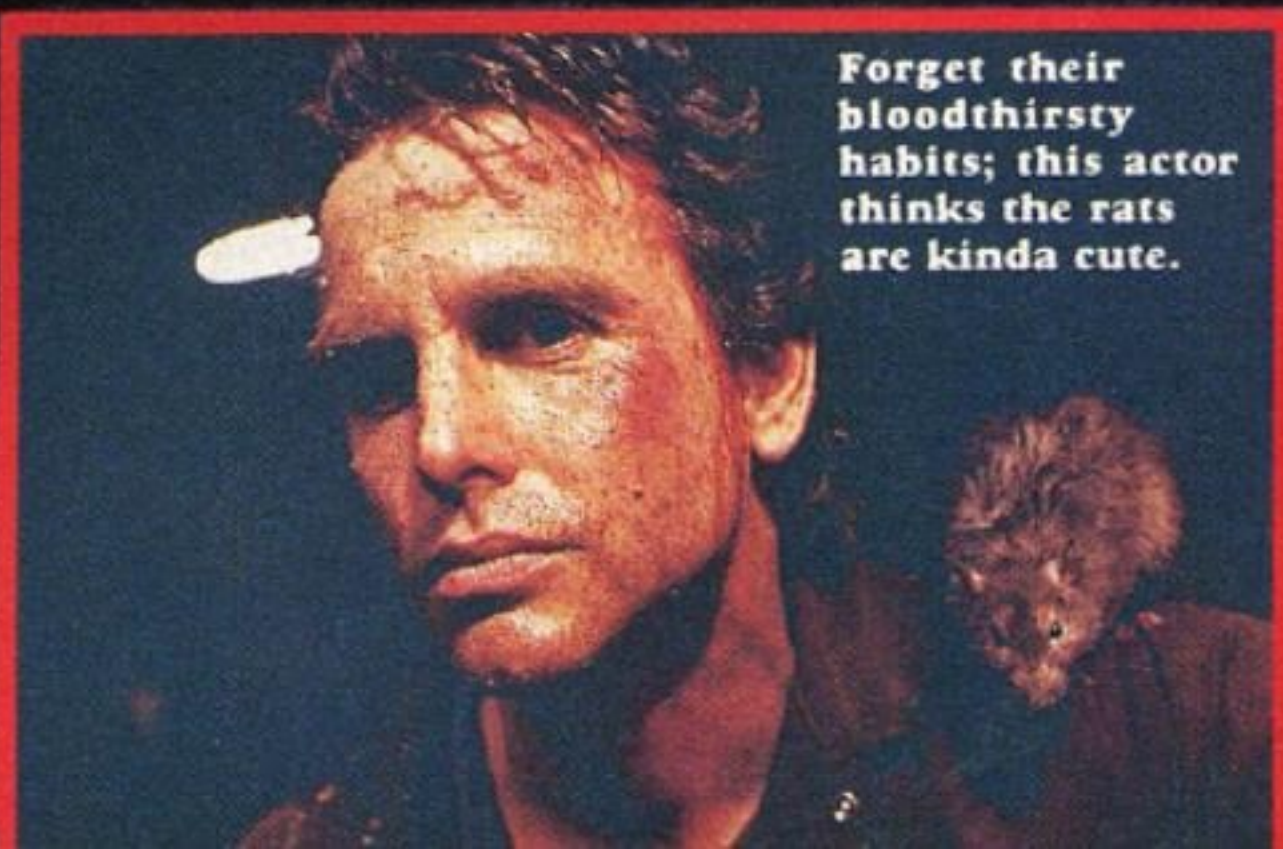
So, considering this sorry history, you’d expect that one day, someone would step forward from the masses and attempt to reverse our negative thinking. Someone with influence—a famous novelist, perhaps? Would you believe Stephen King?

Well, forget it.

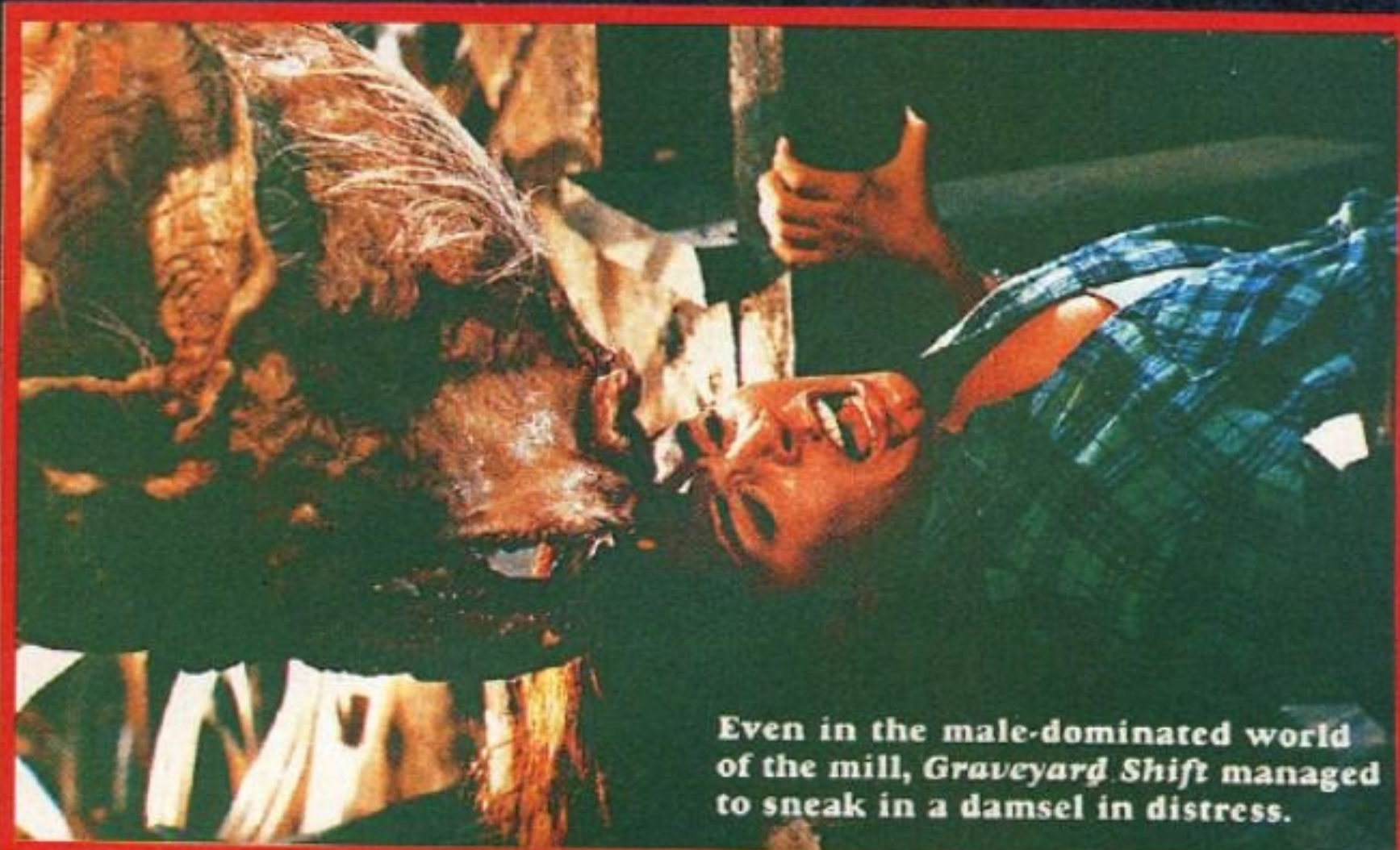
While it’s true that the King-inspired *Graveyard Shift*—opening October 26 from Paramount—employs a cast of over 200 rats, don’t expect to see them cuddling up to the human cast. This is a horror film, and *Graveyard Shift*’s primary objective isn’t to promote the rat as a benign friend of mankind. Quite the contrary: these rats are being paid to be nasty. Who cares if, behind the scenes, they prefer to spend their leisure time sleeping, eating and scratching? It’s what’s in front of the lens that counts, and when called upon, the rodents perform like seasoned troupers.

FANGORIA found out for itself through an exclusive glimpse of the *Graveyard Shift* set on Friday, July 13. Bad omens aside, the day was postcard-perfect: Temperatures had soared into the high 80s (quite unusual by Maine standards), and blue skies and sunshine abounded.

For those unfamiliar with King’s rat tale (pardon the pun), a little history lesson is in order. *Graveyard Shift* was first published by *Cavalier* magazine around 1971, when King was virtually an unknown commod-



Forget their bloodthirsty habits; this actor thinks the rats are kinda cute.



Even in the male-dominated world of the mill, *Graveyard Shift* managed to sneak in a damsel in distress.

"It's tough, because we have an accelerated schedule—the premiere date for *Graveyard Shift* is only three months away, and we're still shooting. We're editing as we go and will wrap up production on July 31, and then postproduction will be done in California."

The *Graveyard Shift* look owes much to its striking Maine scenery, and the Bartlett Yarns Mills (renamed the Bachman Mill—get it?—for the film) in the town of Harmony is a knockout. "I scoured Maine for just the right places, and Harmony was one of my first choices," Dunn reveals. "When logistics proved agreeable, we went to work. This mill could've been de-

ity. It was later incorporated (with slight alterations) into *Night Shift*, King's first short story compilation, published under the Doubleday banner in 1978. Following his elevation to popular icon (and after the immensely successful film adaptation of *Carrie*), anything with King's name on it became fair game for a screen treatment. Producers soon began eyeing the *Night Shift* collection, and from this emerged a string of films of varying quality.

Dunn is the man responsible for getting *Graveyard Shift* off paper and into the film can. Two years ago, Dunn purchased the rights to King's short story and began the arduous process of not only securing financial backing, but finding the proper director as well. The fact that a script already existed (courtesy of neophyte screenwriter John Esposito) helped pique the interest of Ralph Singleton, up to then best known as producer and sometimes

"Rats are extremely inquisitive creatures. It takes patience and plenty of peanut butter to get them to do what you want."
—Dave Allsberry, animal trainer

The *Graveyard Shift* adaptation complements King's story quite nicely, opening up to allow more background for the main character of John Hall. The basic premise remains the same—millworkers are recruited to clean out the basement of the Bachman Mill, a dank cavern filled with rotting bags of wool, machinery, and other assorted refuse (including, need we mention, rats). High-pressure hoses are used to wash away the sludge, but the rats are survivors and begin to fight back. Violent attacks occur, and understandably, the crew balks at continuing the operation. Nasty foreman Warwick pushes ahead.

And then a subcellar is found.

What lies in wait there should provide fuel for many a nightmare: a mutant "bat-rat," hideous beyond description.

Maine-based producer William

director of television's cop drama *Cagney and Lacey*.

Explains Dunn, "I met Ralph when we were both involved with the *Pet Sematary* project. He was associate producer, I was location manager, and we became fast friends. I already had *Graveyard Shift* in my pocket, and eventually I approached him about directing it. Ralph wasn't too keen on the idea of tackling a short story for his film debut, but after reading Esposito's excellent treatment, his mind was changed."

Singleton spent the next year and a half redeveloping the script with Esposito, always maintaining a close link to King's original concept: that *Graveyard Shift* center around one particular human conflict. With backing supplied by Sugar Entertainment, the film was ready to roll.

"Ralph has done an excellent job, really outstanding," praises Dunn.

signed by Stephen King himself, it's that authentic. All we did was change the name and construct a fake cemetery outside. Other than that, what you'll see is functional, and many of the employees are genuine.

"I fully expect that *Graveyard Shift* will click with the public," Dunn goes on. "Stephen King is a hot ticket, and his films have usually generated big business. *Graveyard Shift* is high class. It will keep you on the edge of your seat. Besides, I'd say we're about due for another rat movie, wouldn't you agree?"

Producers Dunn and Singleton have no qualms about referring to *Graveyard Shift* as a horror film. "A



If the promise of extra pay doesn't work, Warwick has other ways of convincing scared workers to stay on the job.

more accurate description would be 'horror-thriller,'" maintains Dunn, "a rollercoaster ride into hell. We've got a monster—a really grotesque beastie we've affectionately dubbed Arlene the Cuisinart. Whatever picture that conjures up in your mind wouldn't even come close to how it looks. She's a terror, and her presence clearly proclaims that *Graveyard Shift* is anything but tame."

On the day Fango arrives, principal photography takes place inside the National Guard Armory in Brewer, Maine. Actors David Andrews (playing the college dropout/drifter/millworker protagonist Hall) and Stephen Macht (as the antagonistic Warwick) are already rehearsing a key scene in the mill's picker room.

And what is a "picker," you ask? Well, rest assured, it's certainly not a special effect, but a working piece of equipment that looms up menacingly above cast and crew. Director Singleton joins FANGORIA beside the gigantic machine and gives us a brief and bloody lesson in how the "Fearmaker" (as it's known on the mill circuit) operates.

"The raw wool is dumped in here," Singleton says, pointing to a gaping maw in the front. "Then it passes through and is torn into strings. These large teeth stretch it further. It's also quite effective on human flesh," he chuckles, eyes flashing. "We did a scene earlier where a millworker tumbles into the picker and is reduced to chopped beef within seconds."

"We're ready to go!" shouts an assistant director. Quiet descends on the set, as Andrews and Macht position themselves to begin filming. Bottled sweat is sprayed on the two men. Andrews lights a cigarette and chants something under his breath. "Action!" commands

Singleton. The camera slowly moves in...and *Graveyard Shift* suddenly comes to life.

The scene: John Hall is relaxing at a table in the picker room, enjoying a much-needed smoke. He hears a noise from the shadows and automatically reaches for his slingshot. "Damn rats," he mutters, snapping an empty soda can over his shoulder. Enter Warwick, who catches the can and crushes it.

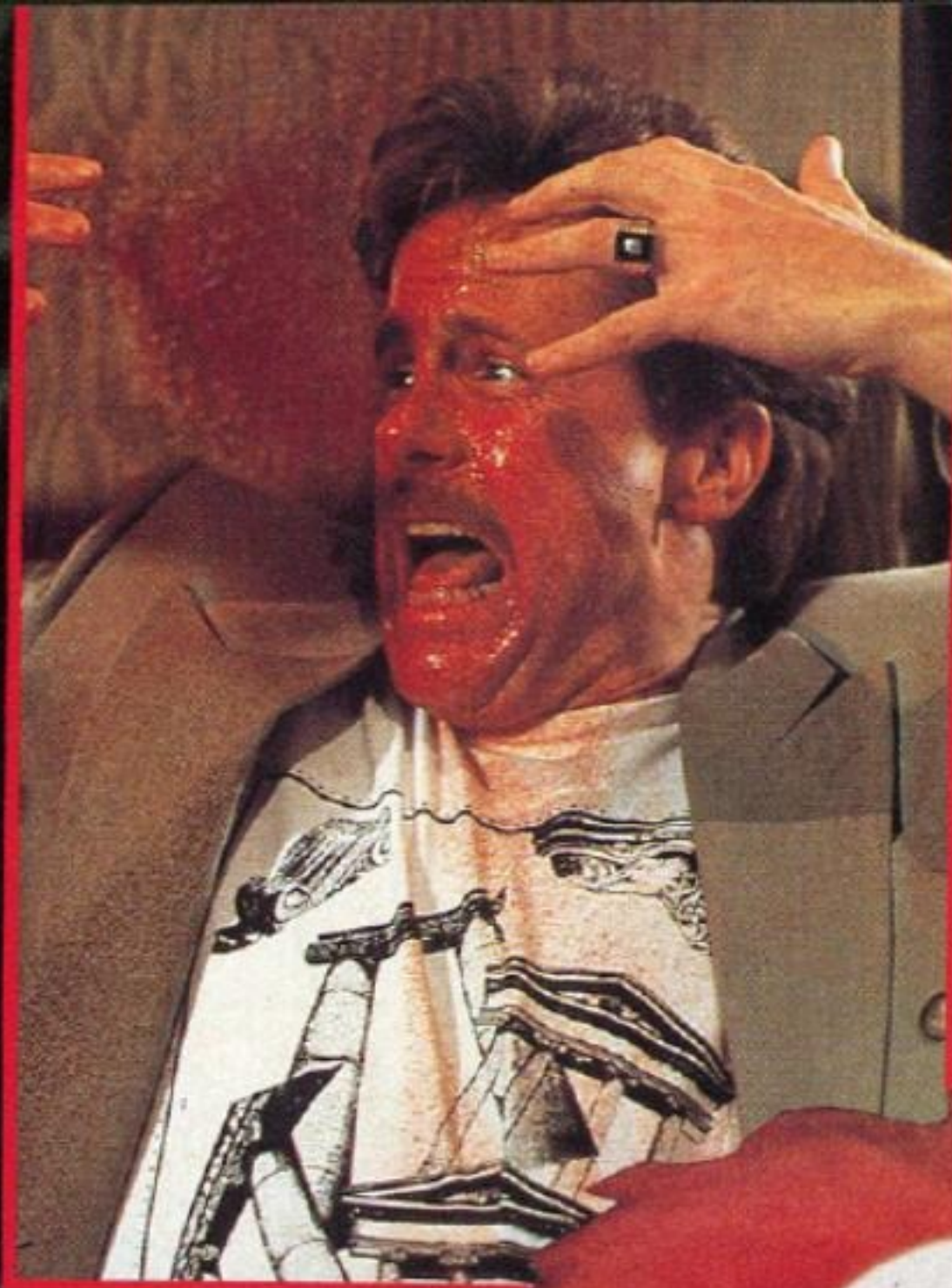
What ensues is a highly-charged confrontation between oppressor and oppressed; this tension underscores both King's short story and the film version. Stephen Macht positively oozes venality as the venomous Warwick.

After two takes, the scene is done. Andrews wanders over and introduces himself, and we retire to his trailer for a little heart-to-heart. "John Hall is a dislocated soul," he says, when asked what drew him to the character. "He's different from the usual slimebuckets I play. This guy is sympathetic. He's just coming out of a tragedy [the loss of his wife] and is still carrying around a great deal of guilt. Part of him wants to hold on, but the rational part tells him to let go, to get on with his life."

"Hall has been on the road for five years, drifting from one end of the country to the other," Andrews goes on. "He finally ends up in Maine and takes a job at the Bachman Mill as a picker operator. The foreman there is a hardnosed asshole and immediately dislikes Hall. He envies Hall's innate sense of intelligence. It threatens Warwick's position of authority, so he decides to make Hall's day-to-day existence as rotten as he possibly can."

Andrews snickers. "Warwick comes to a rather grisly end when he bumps into Arlene. Man, the

(continued on page 68)



Night Court's Harry Anderson isn't used to having so much blood splashed on him.

CHECK IT OUT

By STEVE NEWTON

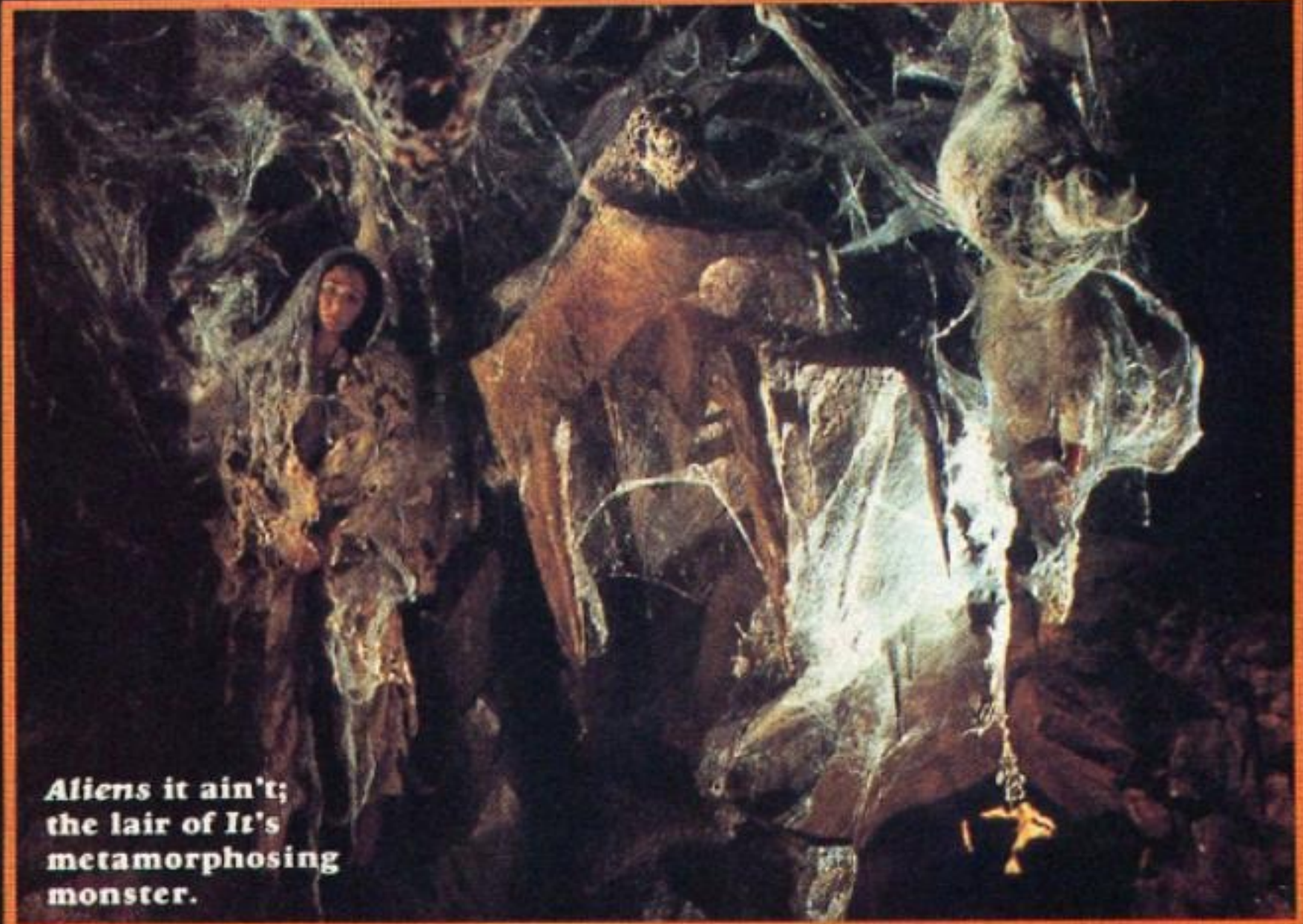
Bozo has risen from the grave!

Stephen King's gargantuan best seller comes to television, but don't worry—not all the good stuff got cut out.

As anyone who's tackled Stephen King's *It* can tell you, the 1986 novel of a shape-shifting, child-chomping monster is not a quick read—that is, unless you happen to be Evelyn Wood's speed-reading coach. Because it's such an enormous tome, it seems apt that the location where the novel is being transformed into a two-part ABC miniseries is the vast expanse of Vancouver's Dominion Bridge Studio. This is the same humongous complex where Martin Brundle meted out gooey justice to those who wronged him in *The Fly II*.

A circuitous walk from the parking lot to Studio 3 puts Fango face to face with George Horie, the project's affable production manager. While Horie sets off in search of the film's director, Tommy Lee Wallace of *Fright Night—Part 2* and *Halloween III* fame, a stroll around the studio affords a look at some of the sets that have been constructed under the supervision of production designer Douglas Higgins. There's one small room decorated as an old-fashioned bathroom; a larger high school shower room; an authentic-looking sewer chamber with interconnecting pipes and drains; and the most commanding structure, a 60-foot-high cavern of plaster and wood that sports various human skulls and cocooned corpses dangling from heavy-duty spider webs.

"We call that 'the lair,'" says Wallace, once we get connected. "That's where *It* makes its home. There are many sets in here; we've worked our way through a huge number of locations, and now we're finally coming back to the stage and doing some of our more intricate monster work, and some of the cli-



Aliens it ain't; the lair of *It*'s metamorphosing monster.

max of both stories—the children's story and the adults' story."

For the uninitiated, *It* tells the tale of a group of small-town kids who face up to a murderous supernatural force, conquer it, and then are called back 30 years later to deal with it again. The grown-up cast for the \$11 million-plus show features several current and ex-TV sitcom stars—John Ritter, Richard ("John Boy") Thomas, Tim (WKRP) Reid, and Harry (Night Court) Anderson—as well as *Rocky Horror*'s Tim Curry, *Cat People*'s Annette O'Toole and Dennis (Fade to Black) Christopher. *It* debuts in November.

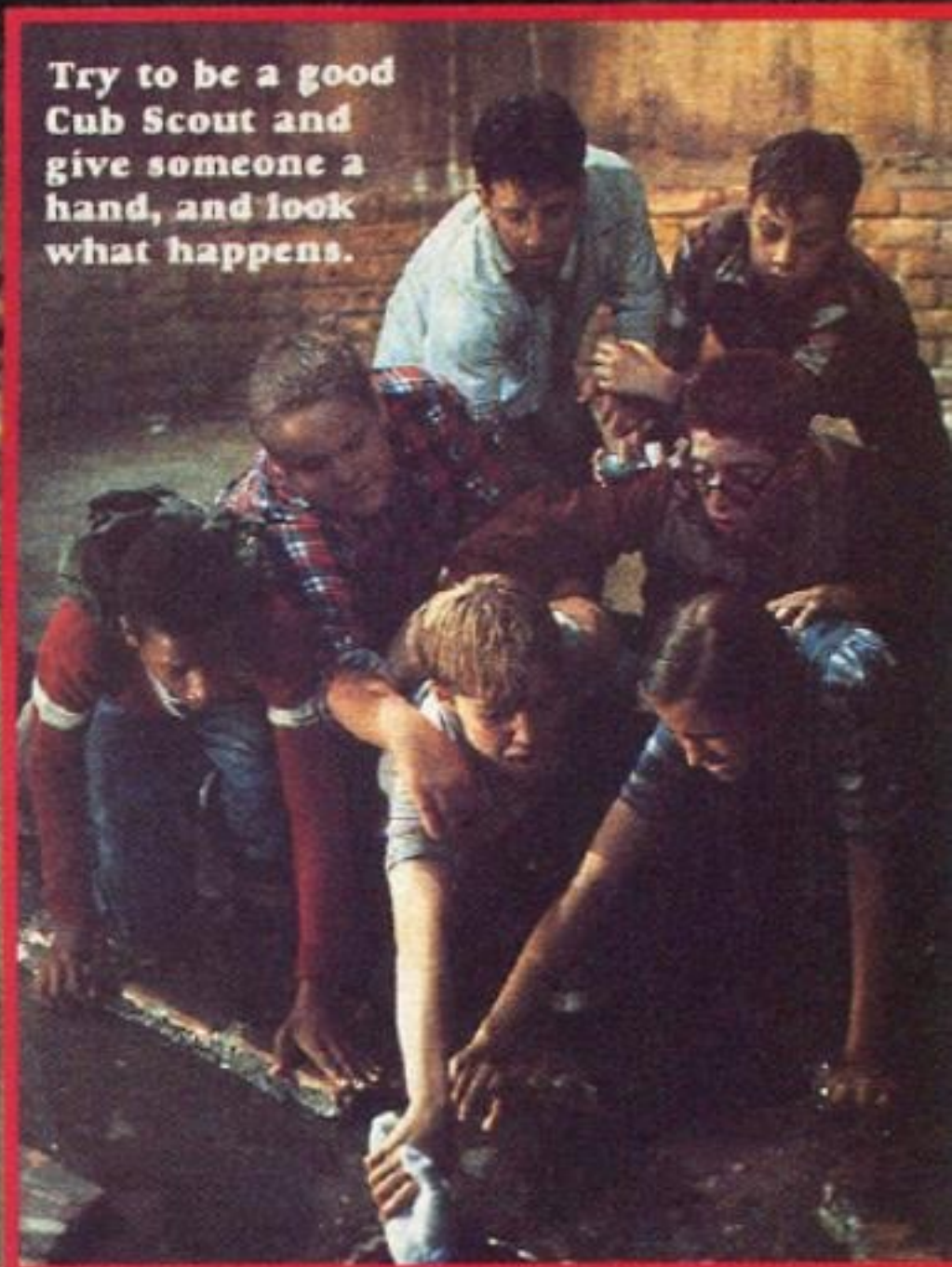
Before long, Wallace is called away to the shower set, where Adam Faraizl—who plays the childhood part of wimpy asthma-sufferer Eddie Kaspbrak—is menaced by half a dozen shower pipes that reach out from the walls like malicious steel flamingos. Clutching a towel around his waist, Faraizl backs away wide-eyed, screams, and hoofs it out of there—but not before Wallace makes sure he's gotten several takes.

Ten minutes later, the action shifts over to the bathroom set, where Wallace puts the group of six young thespians through their paces for a scene in which heroine

Beverly, played by Emily Perkins, shows her pals in the "Losers Club" the blood that has drenched her bathroom—but which only they can see. Numerous takes follow before the youngsters' performances are satisfactory to Wallace, who prods with gentle instructions and seems terribly patient throughout. But working with all those kids can't be too easy.

"Well, it takes more time," admits Wallace, catching another breather. "And time is one commodity that we don't have very much of on this shoot. So we get into a crunch point quite often. But they're giving 100 percent, and some really wonderful things are coming out of it."

Try to be a good Cub Scout and give someone a hand, and look what happens.



"There's something about the novel that truly feels epic in nature, and the hope was to preserve that experience."

—Lawrence D. Cohen, screenwriter

This victim left a message for us on the bathroom wall. Too bad he died before he could include his number.

Wallace is again whisked away, this time to oversee the blowing up of a blood balloon in the bathroom sink. A sharp report sends a nicely realistic splash of red stuff up onto the mirror over the sink and across the wall. "Anybody with anything to do with the blood, come and take a look at this," instructs Wallace, and while the crew is marveling over the effect of a well-placed blood bomb, Jonathan Brandis, the lead child actor, gives Fango a brief interview in the comfort of his trailer. (A brief aside to the grown-up actors, all of whom—with the exception of Tim Curry [see next issue]—snubbed Fango's request for interviews: Hope it gets you!)

Brandis plays the young Bill Denbrough, the stuttering leader of the Losers Club who grows up to become a best-selling horror novelist. Genre fans may recall Brandis for his portrayal of the stepson in *Stepfather II*; he was the one who put Terry O'Quinn down for the (second) count with a nicely placed hammer-claw. But that was child's play compared to his work on *It*.

"One of the reasons this movie's harder is that I have to stutter," explains the 14-year-old actor. "And that's a really difficult thing—which I never realized when I auditioned for it. They said I had to stutter, and I thought, 'Hey, that can't be so hard!' But I had to get coaching on the set, because it was really tough."

Before taking on *It*, Brandis spent five and a half months filming George (Man from Snowy River) Miller's *Neverending Story 2*, in which he won the starring role of book-loving adventurer Bastian. "That whole movie is effects," he enthuses. "For five months I was looking at stuff that wasn't there."

Brandis says that the time he spent working with O'Quinn on *Stepfather II* was a good deal of fun. And it wasn't without its bizarre moments. "He used to come into the makeup trailer and practice his stepfather faces in the mirror. That was kinda freaky."

Back on the set, the long-haired, bespectacled Wallace is once more hunted down between takes. Guessing that he'll not be available for long, Fango tosses him a real easy question: Was it not a real bitch



Pretty gross for network TV, huh? Norman Cabrera designed and sculpted the Al Marsh corpse.

Photo: Courtesy Bart Mixon

for *It's* screenwriter to get King's economy-size novel down to script form?

"Yes," Wallace states unequivocally. "But Larry Cohen did a wonderful job of restructuring. It's set up in two parts; the first part is the children's story, and the second part gets the grown-ups back to the town where they do battle with the beast."

Lawrence D. Cohen (not to be confused with *It's Alive's* Larry Cohen), who previously adapted King when he wrote the script for *Carrie*, knew that the sheer volume of *It* would make the job a dirty one. "The book is a behemoth," says the 42-year-old screenwriter. "To take an 1,130-page book and find a way of condensing it and adapting it—both for television and the amount of time—was truly a challenge. But when the producers approached me I was berserk to do it, having been a big fan of the book. There's something about the novel that truly feels epic in its nature, and the hope was

"With this corpse [ABC is] saying, 'We don't want it like American Werewolf—we don't want any meat hanging off.'"

—Bart Mixon, makeup FX chief

to preserve that part of the experience—even though we're not in the tradition of *Winds of War* anymore."

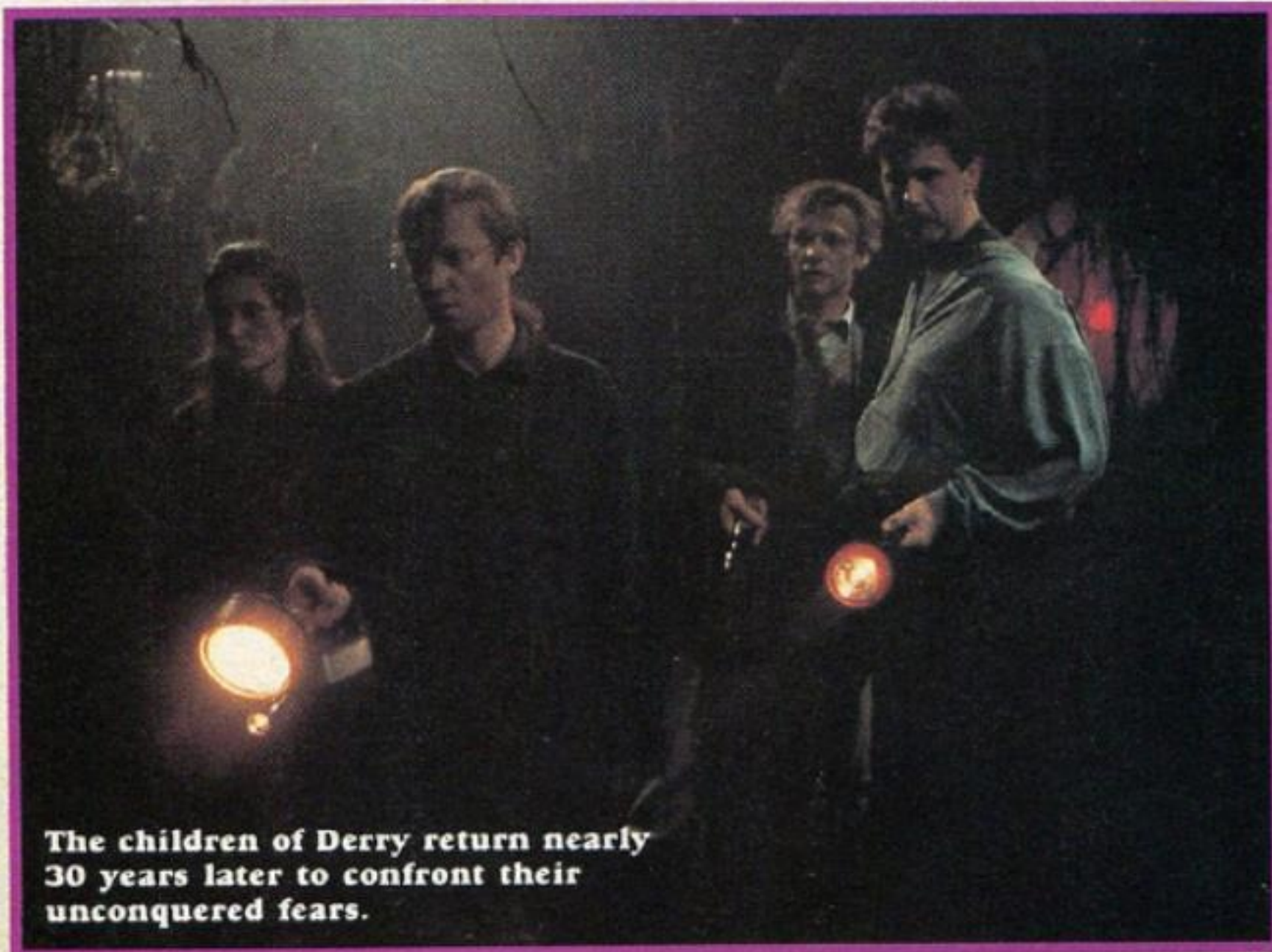
At various times, there was talk of making the film as a six-hour—or even an eight-hour—series, before the four-hour format was chosen.

"With the four-hour form, the story fell into place very neatly," says Cohen. "Because there's seven characters, and in television format, an evening of two hours is basically divided into seven acts. So telling seven characters' backstories and getting to meet them as adults in the first two hours was something that was suited to the form itself. The second two hours—Part 2 of the miniseries—finds those seven adults on their home turf with the ghost of what's happened in the past."

(continued on page 55)



Photo: Courtesy Bart Nixon



The children of Derry return nearly 30 years later to confront their unconquered fears.



Bart Nixon and crew recreated the Wolf Man for one of It's shape-shifting sprees.

Young Norman Bates

PSYCHO IV THE BEGINNING

By HARVEY SOLOMON

Tony Perkins and writer Joseph Stefano reteam under director Mick Garris to explore how Hitchcock's classic character became the maniac he is today.

The three faces of Norman pose before the amazing Bates house recreation.

It took more than 20 years for the first *Psycho* sequel to emerge, but in the last decade Alfred Hitchcock's classic has spawned three followups. The latest, *Psycho IV: The Beginning*, premieres this November domestically on Showtime, while Universal will release it theatrically overseas. Shot at Universal's new production facilities in Orlando, Florida, the film utilizes a set that faithfully reproduces the original Bates house interior. Blueprints of the original helped in this reconstruction, which also contains many of the props used in the first *Psycho*. Hilton Green, who served in various capacities on all the *Psycho* films, executive produces, and Tony Gardner supplies the makeup FX.

Psycho IV deviates from its pre-

decessors by combining prequel elements in the Joseph Stefano script. Stefano, who wrote the screenplay for Hitchcock's trendsetter, spent several intervening years writing and producing *The Outer Limits*, and has recently returned to television with *Swamp Thing* for the USA Network. Anthony Perkins returns in his signature role of Norman Bates, recalling the catastrophic events of his adolescence to a modern-day radio talk show host played by CCH Pounder. (*E.T.*'s Henry Thomas, now a strapping teen with a remarkable resemblance to Perkins, portrays the young Norman.) When a talk show's subject is matricide, and the prime caller is Norman, you can be sure murder is in the air. The host picks up the scent and realizes that

"Hold still... you've got a fly on your shoulder."



Norman is preparing to strike again. "Building tension is much more interesting to me than throwing blood on the lens," director Mick (Crittters 2) Garris maintains. "What wraps you up is the people in a

"I'm trying to make a movie now that has its own sense of style, vision and urgency."

—Mick Garris, director

Tony Perkins gets the bad news that he's being replaced by that E.T. kid.

movie and where they take you. We've had three *Psycho* movies, and this script is very different from the others. Even though the first film was not particularly graphic in its portrayals, for 1960 it was very shocking. I'm trying to make a movie now that has its own sense of style, vision and urgency."

Where *Psycho IV*'s twisted plot ends up remains a mystery, even to critics used to reviewing a finished product. Showtime has shrouded the ending in mystery by swearing the cast and crew to secrecy and announcing plans to shoot multiple endings to maintain the suspense. The fact that the pay cable service was willing to undertake this film when no other U.S. distributor wanted it only underscores its riskiness. "I'm glad it's for Showtime,"

John Blake and Celeste Comtois ready Mother for a big date.

Garris comments, "because there's no ratings system. The sexual content is very unusual. It's not just lovemaking scenes, it's very sexually confused. It's very frank and slightly twisted."

While *Psycho* devotees tend to remember Norman's mother as an elderly woman, she was only 40 years old when she was killed. *Psycho IV* vividly brings her to life in the person of Olivia Hussey, best remembered for her performance as Juliet in Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. "Norman has turned her into the quintessential old lady mother in his mind," explains

Garris, "but in *Psycho IV* we find she's anything but. Olivia is beautiful, and yet has this fragility and sensitivity and strength. It's a wonderfully fine line to show someone's madness and try and find the reality in it. I didn't want it seeming like typical horror-movie psychosis."

Screenwriter Stefano had envisioned the character's origins more than 30 years ago when adapting Robert Bloch's novel into the *Psycho* script. With *Psycho IV*, he finally had the opportunity to fill in the blanks by dramatizing the schizophrenic actions of Norma Bates that help explain why her son turned into such a ladykiller. "I had a lot of that knowledge when I wrote the original *Psycho*," recalls Stefano, "none of which I could include in the script. But in order to create the Norman Bates that Anthony Perkins was playing, as opposed to the Norman Bates in the book, I needed to know what had happened during his upbringing."

"This boy killed his mother," Stefano continues, "which is one of the most unbearable crimes. It goes all the way back to Greek tragedy. I had some thoughts of what drove



Photo: Courtesy Tony Gardner

him to do that, and I was talking to Hitchcock one day and described a scene when Norman was around 14 or 15 years old. Hitch listened to it and said, 'It's a shame we can't use it.' And when I talked to the people at Universal about doing the prequel, that was one of the scenes I described. It's more horrifying than any knife-slashing or physical violence. What I'd like to have happen is that the audience reexamine how they behave toward their children, because I feel the Norman Bateses of the world are made, not born."

One thing for sure is that the Norman Bates character helped



Just like Hitchcock, *Psycho IV* director Garris uses lots of cuts in his murder scenes.

grotesque horror. That's what I've got here. I've got a mother who's seductive, very charming—you'd like her very much. But she's destroying a mind."

The look and feel of the movie belongs to Garris, who as director must translate the words into images. "The obvious choice would be to do the flashbacks in black and white or sepia tone," says Garris. "But to me, imagination and memory are far more colorful than real life, so I'm trying to rob the contemporary scenes of color and go very monochromatic in a color film. A little bit of smoking the sets softens the look, and then when we go into the past we heighten it with a lot of primary colors—no diffusion, just rock hard edges."

Any film that integrates so many flashback scenes runs a huge risk of diluting the action and dissipating the storyline's momentum. In virtually every present-day scene, Perkins is alone in his kitchen, speaking on the phone with Pounder, who's desperately trying to keep him on the line. "When you've been acting on stage, screen and on television as long as I have," Perkins explains, "you adapt your ability, whatever it is, to the circumstance. You don't think of it as an obstacle, but rather as an opportunity to do something a little different. Obviously if you're alone in a scene you have to be twice as good, twice as interesting than you might be if you were sharing it with a talented companion. But it's all in the writing, and this script is very skillful."

While the actor credits the writer, the director in turn credits the actor. "It's tough to have to react to somebody off camera just reading the lines, but Tony is really good at it," Garris enthuses. "His focus and concentration are excellent. He's a fine actor, both technically and emotionally. We are playing it as if [Norman and the talk show host] were in the same room together. The phone becomes a character and it is a little challenging, but I think it plays to the proper effect."

Many people might wonder just what effect sequels are having on Garris himself, following his involvement in *Critters 2* and *The Fly II*. "I didn't ever want to be involved in another sequel," he admits. "The number four in a title makes people think, 'Oh no, more of this.' But *Psycho IV* is not at all what everybody expects from a Norman Bates movie."

make the career of Anthony Perkins, who has been identified with the role ever since. "It's been a mixed blessing," Perkins opines. "Norman is such an interesting character, it's not as if it were a cartoon or easy-to-define role. There are so many different facets to Norman that if you're going to be associated with a role, it might as well be something like that."

While Perkins' onscreen persona is remembered best from the film, writer Stefano has been forced to cope with similar typecasting. "It's changed through the decades," Stefano comments. "In the '60s, it was more of a curse, because I had a very hard time getting anybody to let me do anything that wasn't horror. Then there was a long period when *Psycho* was just an old movie that nobody talked about anymore. Then in the '80s, something began to happen—not just with *Psycho*, but with other movies. The younger generation began to notice that there was a great deal of artistry to the older genre films. I love the sense of having been involved with something that people enjoy so much."

Perkins further explains the reasons for *Psycho*'s renewed dominance. "It may be because Hitchcock has become even more greatly revered than when he was alive and making pictures," the actor reasons. "The television remake of his series [on the USA Network] has helped. Hitchcock is one of those authentic originals who can only gain in popularity, and *Psycho* is one of his pictures that seems to

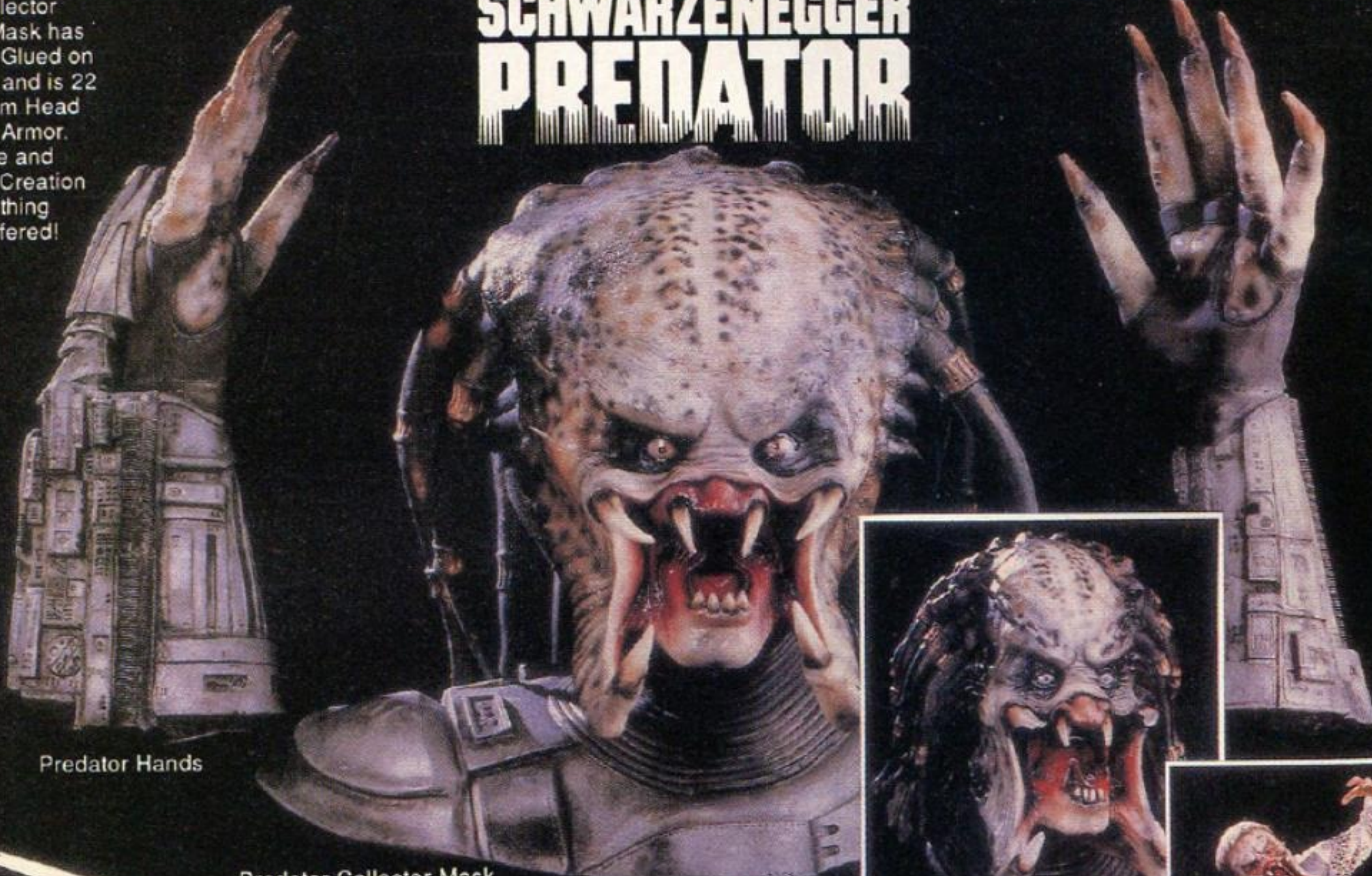
have the most staying power."

After adding the director's chores to his traditional on-camera role in *Psycho III*, Perkins has adjusted quite nicely to returning to his singular screen part. "This film has a different kind of script," he judges. "*Psycho III* basically confined itself to the motel and the house, and it's those venues I'm familiar with. I really wouldn't have known what to do with Norman's marriage and the talk show scenes."

The intercutting between those present-day segments and the flashback scenes propels *Psycho IV* in a slightly skewed manner. "The dramatic device of a radio talk show links Norman Bates' present and past," Stefano elaborates, "so I went from there and created a present-day story so we know who he is today, as opposed to when we last saw him four or five years ago in *Psycho III*. He's come a long way, and the persona I created for him today is much closer to the Norman who won your heart in *Psycho*, only now it's more genuine. Then he didn't even know he had this terrible side, so when he's being nice and gentle with Janet Leigh, he doesn't know that exists. Now he's been through all that—he's had four years of very tough therapy at an institution. There's almost something Dickensian about the horror in *Psycho IV*. When you read *Oliver Twist*, there isn't a lot of horrific stuff in it. But when you think what they're doing to those children and how children were treated in those days, it's a kind of

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PUPPET MASTER

It's hard to believe that anybody married to Catherine (Child's Play) Hicks would ever, in the immortal words of Garbo, want to be alone. But Kevin Yagher, that heir apparent to the throne of makeup FX king, does have moments when he's feeling low. And when he does, more often than not he will get in his car, drive across town to his Burbank shop, go into his main work area and sit.

"I'll look around and see Weird Al on one wall, the bugs from *Meet the Applegates* on another and maybe a Freddy mask or a Chucky doll sitting on a shelf," muses Yagher. "I'll think to myself, 'Yeah, this is what I do for a living,' and it will lift my spirits."

Who's brave enough to tell Chucky and the Crypt Keeper what to do? Why, the man who created them, as he joins the ranks of director/FX men.

By MARC SHAPIRO

The artist is in a decidedly cheerful mood during a recent visit to his little shop of horrors. The aforementioned Hicks is there, helping out with phone calls and paperwork, and Yagher, despite going through what he calls a "slow

period," is in an upbeat mood as he gives Fango the grand tour.

"Puppets! Puppets! It's all puppets!" laughs Yagher as he points out bits and pieces of Chucky and *Tales from the Crypt's* Crypt Keeper lying on nearby workbenches. "The

new wave of special effects is all going to puppets."

Yagher settles in to reflect on his career, one that most horror historians will say began when the young artist was "one of 500 fourth place winners" in the Fango Draw The Thing contest. His career had a number of starts and stops before the still wet-behind-the-ears rookie was dropped into the catbird seat as makeup jockey on *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*.

"Doing the *Nightmare* films really got me started," agrees the Ohio-born Yagher. "The series was already on its way, and I just stepped in and rode along with it."

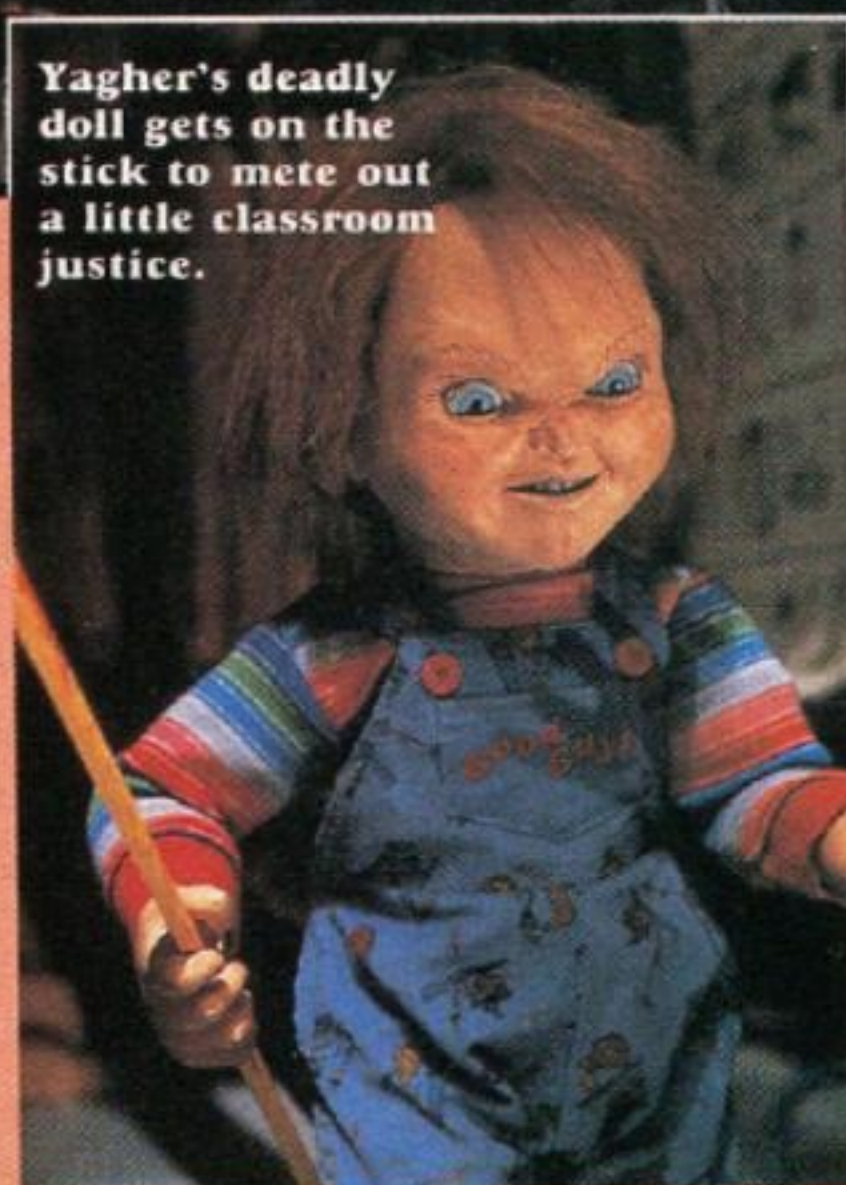
The trip led to such FX assignments as *The Hidden*, *Child's Play* and its new sequel, the bookend segments of HBO's *Tales from the Crypt* and, most recently, his direct-

"This film ain't big enough for two redheads!"—and Chucky aims to fix that problem.

Child's Play 2's new, improved villain still has trouble adjusting to high altitudes.



Yagher's deadly doll gets on the stick to mete out a little classroom justice.



Chucky Photos: Luke Wynne/Copyright 1990 Universal

ing debut in that series' "Lower Berth" episode.

"I didn't get into this business to direct," Yagher admits, "but after I had been out here for a while, I began to feel frustrated that so many of my ideas were getting stifled or changed. The desire to direct kept growing as I began working with as many bad directors as good ones. I started thinking, 'I could do this.'"

Yagher slowly edged toward his first job behind the camera by convincing *Crypt* producers Joel Silver and William Teitler to let him direct some of the wraparound *Crypt* Keeper segments. In that capacity, Yagher worked on 10 episodes during the first two seasons and will be doing most of them for the third.

"During the first season," Yagher details, "I started using wider shots, put the *Crypt* Keeper in a bunch of neat suits and placed him all over the set. But, because the segments have to be cranked out so fast, we're

"I'd also like to be able to go off and direct a mainstream film that has nothing to do with rubber or latex."

starting to use more closeups and keeping him behind the desk. That kind of limits the things we can do."

His success helming the *Crypt* bits finally convinced the show's producers to give him a shot at a full-length episode. "Lower Berth" chronicles the bizarre courtship of the *Crypt* Keeper's parents: a two-faced mongoloid creature and a 4,000-year-old mummy. Fear was initially his constant companion on

his maiden directorial voyage.

"I've always had the attitude that I can best get things done by throwing myself into them. But those first 15 minutes on the first day of shooting just scared the crap out of me. I had all these people standing around saying, 'OK, Kevin, what's the first shot?' Until I got that first shot off it was either sink or swim. I either had to take control or spend the next six days working with a crew who thought they were dealing with a jerk."

Adding to Yagher's concern was *Tales from the Crypt*'s tight filming schedule and minuscule budget. Yagher prepared for the squeeze by storyboarding and breaking down each shot wherever possible. If directing wasn't enough, the busy novice eventually wound up playing the creature in a short scene.

Yagher helmed "Lower Berth" on a graveyard shift schedule and faced a constant battle against dust and



If there's anything Chucky can't stand, it's a kid who falls asleep in class.

do-or-die game of chop poker. Yagher created a series of 12 left and right prosthetic hands for the scenes in which digits are severed.

"I liked doing that episode," the artist judges, "because it gave me a chance to do something that was an actual effect as opposed to a makeup. In 'The Thing from the Grave,' I did a basic zombie makeup and a puppet with a mechanical arm that comes out of the ground. 'The Secret' contained a werewolf makeup and vampire teeth, and 'Lower Berth' was a bit of a first for me in that I was able, on the Enoch creature, to combine makeup with mechanics."

Yagher recently completed a four-month tour of duty on *Child's Play 2* which, by its conclusion, had Yagher "sick of red hair and toys." His second trip into the dollhouse, however, provided the opportunity to make some FX improvements.

"For openers, we made Chucky's face more animated," explains Yagher. "In the first film, we gave him a neutral face that would let him smile. But he could never really give that evil, shit-eating grin like the doll in *Poltergeist*. This time, we gave him a new smiling head which allows him more of a grimace."

In addition, Chucky's movements also came under scrutiny. "We got the chance to finally make a good walking Chucky," he reveals. "In the first film, we used a servo motor doll that had too much of a jerky motion to it when it moved. For the sequel, we created a half-body character with mechanical legs that was all

half-body model (or "hero doll," as it was known on the set), this allowed Chucky to walk on camera without hiding any part of the character. Yagher sees this as a welcome improvement over the first film. "There we used a little person [for the walking shots], but we had to build 30 percent larger sets for it, and ultimately that's costly."

While the sequel's FX may have saved money, they were no less demanding in terms of manpower. Nine puppeteers were required to operate Chucky, all of them huddled under the set, carefully synchronizing their actions to give the puppets "life." They got a break, however, through the use of fast-motion

Chucky's sequel contract called for Yagher to act as his masseur in addition to his other chores.



smoke from the dirt being thrown around to simulate the show's 1910 carnival set.

"The rough part, however, was the things more experienced directors take for granted," Yagher opines. "Things like giving actors and crew orders and having to deal with getting so many pages of script shot each day. But after a while, it stopped feeling strange and started feeling pretty good. When the show was finally completed, I was on the greatest high anybody could have. I had been in total control and was able to paint a picture the way I felt it should be painted."

Yagher returns to the FX side of *Tales from the Crypt* and lays out the logistics of the Crypt Keeper, a ghoulish creation he calls "a D.C. Follies type of puppet."

"We use a puppeteer with a hand inside the head and inside the arm," he describes. "Four other puppeteers work the facial expressions of the head [which all function with the aid of small servo motors]. The smile is the only thing that is cable-controlled, and that's only because it has so much latex to pull back."

Furthermore, Yagher furnished the FX for a number of the episodes themselves. For the first season's "Only Sin Deep," he supplied Lea Thompson with a pus, wart and boil-laden old age makeup. In "Cutting Cards," in which two enemies play a

"The desire to direct kept growing as I began to feel frustrated that so many of my ideas were stifled or changed."

cable-controlled. Doing the doll that way allowed us to give the illusion of full human muscle power and to get good waist-up shots from almost any angle."

For shots in which Chucky needed to be fully visible, a third, standing doll was created by Yagher and crew. Controlled by cables leading up through the floor into one of the feet, this model could be shot from all angles, and could turn or take a step without cheating or cropping the shot. Combined with the cable-controlled legs on the

filming of Chucky's actions, particularly his speech. When the doll had an especially difficult action to perform or line to say, the camera would roll at 18 frames per second, instead of the usual 24, allowing the operators to slow down and more carefully time their movements. When the film is projected at normal speed, the motions come off smoothly.

As second unit director on many of the film's Chucky-intensive scenes, Yagher also had the opportunity to put his creation through its paces.

"Lower Berth"
features the
strangest ménage
à trois in TV
history.



Crypt Pix: Michael Paris/Copyright HBO

"Doing the second unit material, like the grave-digging scenes and the car chase stuff, allowed me to go off and rehearse the doll and set it up to its best advantage," Yagher says. "It also pointed up my feelings about having a special effects person direct. When you know the capabilities of the effects, you can make better use of them than a normal director could. A director/effectsman can get the angles that translate into the audience getting more out of the effects."

Another film that will allow audiences to see Yagher's work is John McNaughton's *The Borrower*—if the film is ever released.

"There was nothing special about what we did on that film," Yagher avers. "The budget did not provide for doing anything out of the ordinary. I did the alien's head and hands, some dummies with severed heads, and a few head transformations with bladder effects. When you get into situations with limited money, what you usually wind up doing is resorting to the things you know you can do best."

For the equally long-delayed *Meet the Applegates*, a comedy about humanoid insects, Yagher bugged out. "We made eight human-sized insects," he explains. "The suits were large enough to permit dancers to get inside and make them move. The heads were radio-controlled, and we

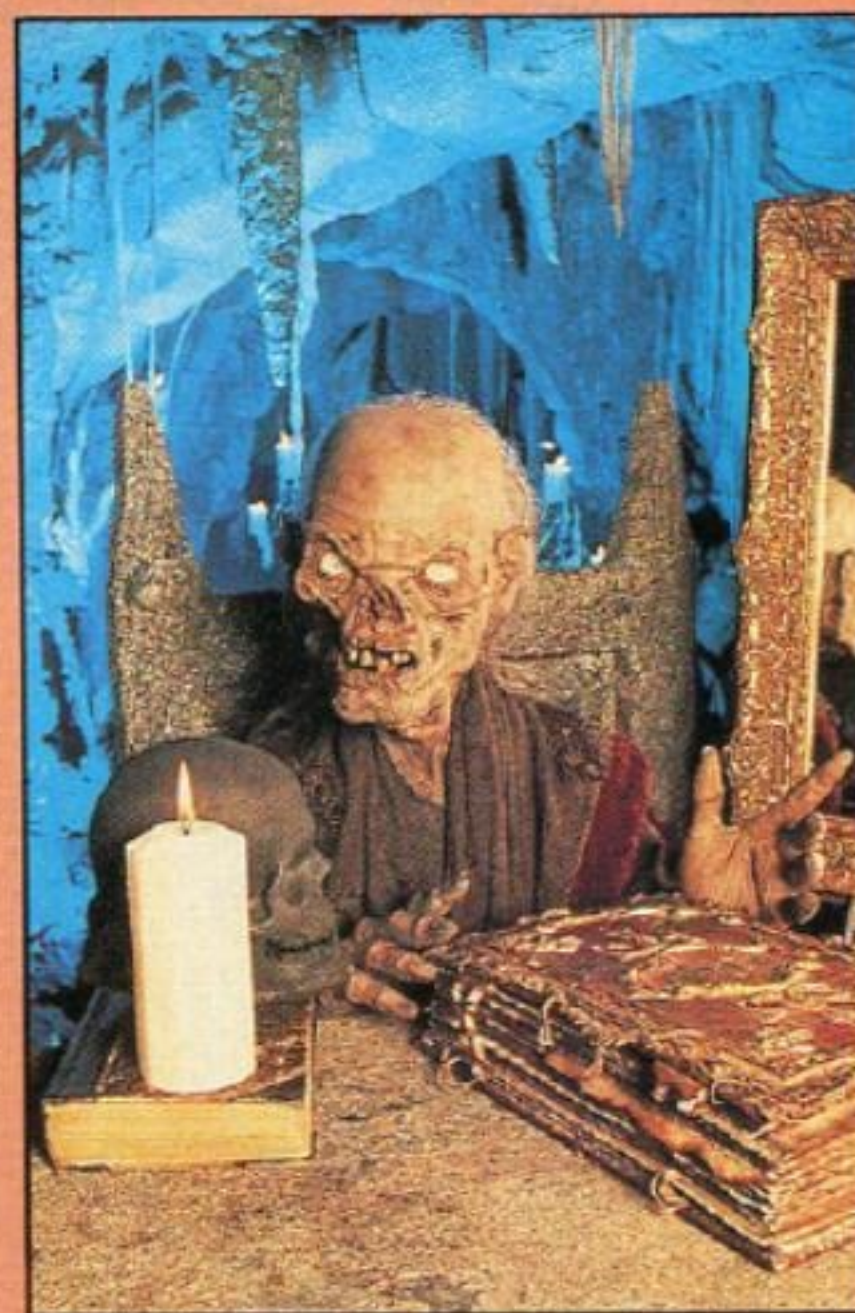
puppeteered the legs."

There's nothing definite in Yagher's immediate future but, like most people in the business, he claims to have several irons in the fire, including projects for Richard Donner and Tom Cruise. Meanwhile, he's excited about his directing prospects and is encouraged by the continuing flow of FX offers. Yagher would like nothing better than to do both, but not necessarily at the same time.

"I don't want to be a director/effects guy," he maintains. "I want to keep the special effects business going because it really is a lot of fun. But I'd also like to be able to go off and direct a mainstream film that has nothing to do with rubber or latex, something like *The Breakfast Club*. But what I'd probably end up doing is having a demon appear right in the middle of the film, trash the place and disappear. It wouldn't have anything to do with the movie," he laughs.

Yagher wanders back out into the main shop, where his crew is working on display heads of past Yagher glories, and contemplates life amid his scare store. "It's weird," he says, "but sometimes I'll be sitting here, and I'll think I see something move out of the corner of my eye. But I don't get spooked by my own creations."

While he doesn't suffer from FX-



The Crypt Keeper wants to introduce you to some fine reading.

phobia, Yagher does admit to dreaming. Does he have nightmares?

"Not anymore. I used to have nightmares about real-life things like paying the rent and, once in a while, I'll see a creature or two in my dreams. But doing what I do for a living tends to take the edge off the nightmares."



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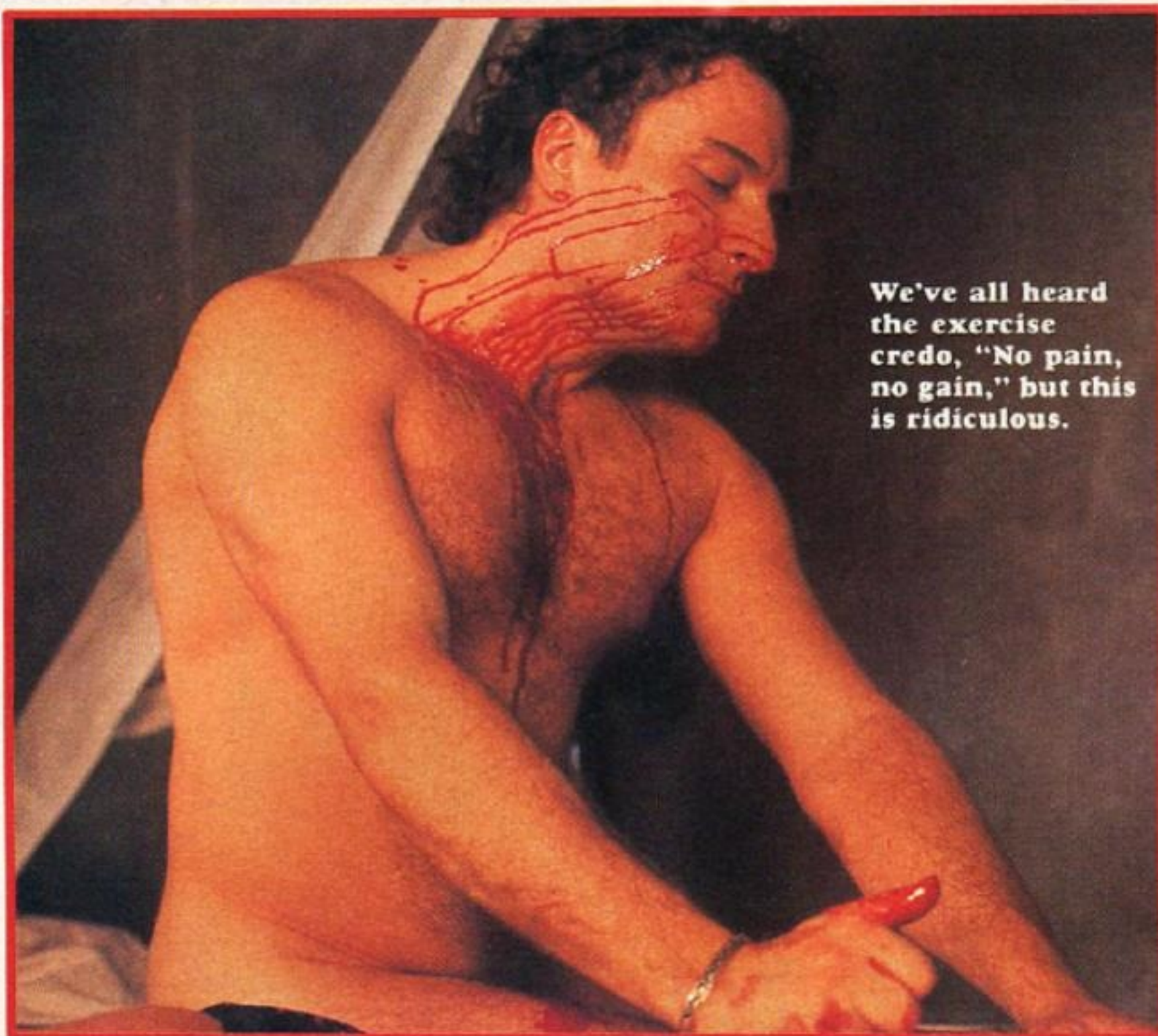
By PETER BLOCH-HANSEN

Red Blooded vampire Heather Thomas finds that vampires are as susceptible to chloroform as they are to garlic.

"Death Warmed Up" director David Blyth went from New Zealand to Canada for his second horror film and had plenty of trouble along the way.

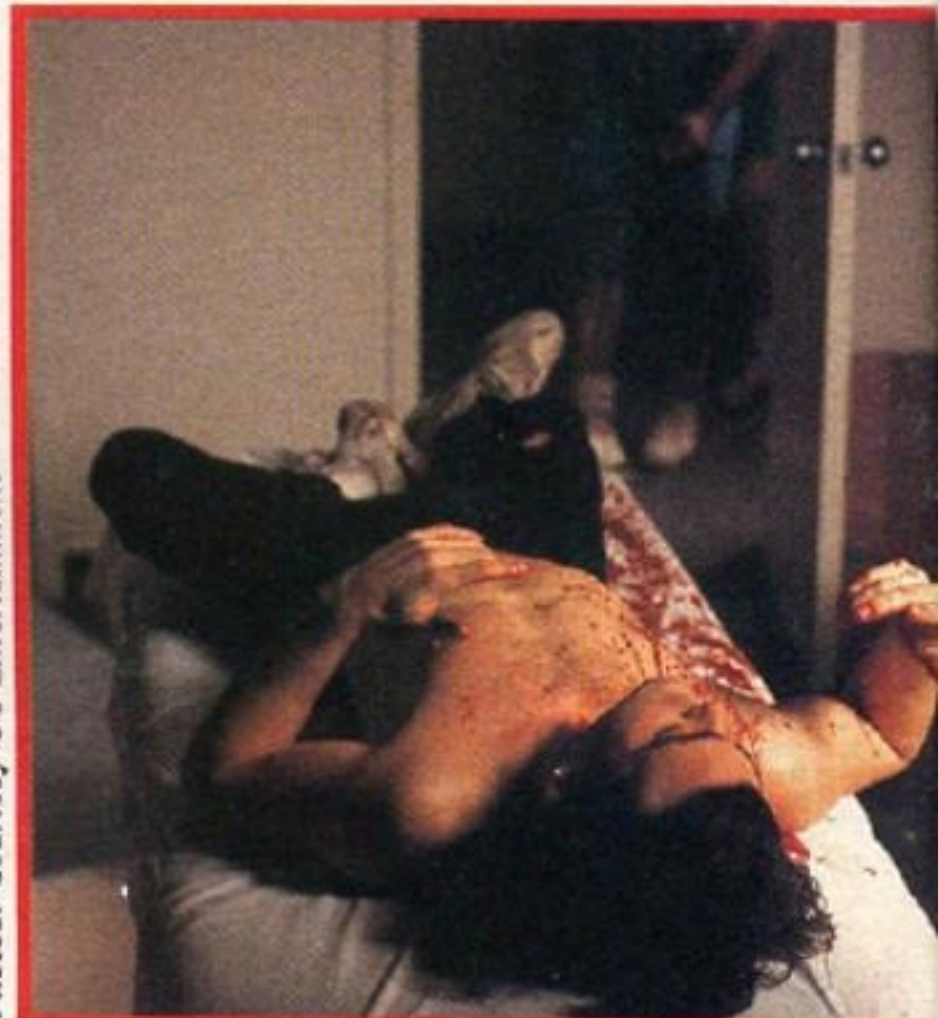
body builders rippling with muscle and shining with freshly applied body oil. They are customers and friends of the gym's owners, grinning shyly, excited at being in a movie, but somehow only half the required number have shown up. Some sharp questions are asked, more hurried

phone calls are made ("Wanna be in a movie?"), and a buzz of conversation sweeps through the crew. Within minutes, various male members start disappearing, only to show up a little later, dressed in exercise outfits. The director nods. They are oiled up like the others and



We've all heard the exercise credo, "No pain, no gain," but this is ridiculous.

Photos: Courtesy SC Entertainment



That's one terrifying wet dream.

assigned to exercise apparatus. Much grinning and kidding ensues. "Hey," shouts the makeup girl, "you run like pansies!" They aren't quite as big as the real weightlifters, but they look OK. The director nods again, returns to his planning. Bogner is told that he has just gotten a parking ticket. "@#*&!!" he comments.

Now the gym's owner arrives with the code to unlock the furnace timer and dispose of the blower noises. The camera is wheeled into place, the actors are all re-oiled and set, Thomas walks through her sexy entrance a few times and everything seems ready to roll. But now the portable smoke generator breaks down. More swearing breaks out.

Bee smokers are brought out from somewhere and lit. No good. Technicians start sweating over the recalcitrant smoke generator, and director and cinematographer put their heads together, gesturing this way and that as they discuss possible lighting changes. Everybody else either finds something to do or something comfortable to sit on. A few wander off to the craft services table downstairs for a snack. They're movie pros; they know how to wait. It looks like it's going to be a long night.

A short time later, though, the smoke generator is repaired. "Action," calls the director in his soft New Zealand twang, and the camera rolls on the day's first take.

Not all the problems are so easily solved. This is low-budget horror, as no one connected with the movie denies. FX coordinator Brock Jolliffe comments, "Most low-budget productions start off pretty wild and wooly but end up, by the time you go through six versions of the script, as something very basic. The dollars are limited, so there are no prosthetics in this film—a few latex bits and pieces, some wax stuff.

"Take this scene today," he goes on. "We were originally going to put the camera right on the guy's neck with the blood spurting, but that's out, so we're putting the camera on the other side—a low angle, a blood tube and hand pump and that's it. Very simple, quick and easy because with this type of production, speed is of the essence. They haven't had the time to build a prosthetic piece. They shoot until it's time to do the effect, and then I come in with gaffer tape, a rubber band, tubing, a couple of spurts of blood. One take and that'll be it."

The budget for *Red Blooded American Girl*, which hits video this month from Prism Entertainment, is somewhere close to \$3 million, so where is the money going? Christopher Plummer, that's where. He stars as Dr. Alcore, a distinguished scientist researching blood diseases. He does not come cheap.

"You've got to have talent in these movies these days," explains coproducer Nicolas (Blood Relations) Stiliadis of Canada's SC Entertainment, "or you can't get them released." The *Red Blooded* talent also includes Andrew (The Fury) Stevens and Canadian Kim (Blind Fear) Coates. "Most of the money



New Zealand director David Blyth (left) with his red-blooded American cast (Thomas and Stevens).



The morning breath's a killer when she's a bloodsucker, as Andrew Stevens finds out.



Actress Thomas violently disagrees with director Blyth's conception of a fully-clothed sex scene.

goes towards talent," Stiliadis continues, "but not all. It's a hi-tech vampire story with a twist, lots of action and stunts. It's a cross between *Cat People* and *The Hunger*."

Red Blooded American Girl is Blyth's first film since *Death Warmup*, although he did some directorial work on *The Horror Show* before leaving over "artistic differences." "There were three directors on the show," he discloses. "I was a compromise director from the beginning. The producer didn't really want me and the studio wanted someone who had some credits. They had already fired one person, and I was actually leaving to go to Europe. I got a phone call and was told I could start working the next day." After a couple of days, however, Blyth was replaced by James Isaac.

The director clearly sees *Red Blooded American Girl* as his chance for a comeback. "In New Zealand, the private funding [for movies] evaporated when the government took away the tax write-offs. That's why I had to leave. Making the transition to America was very hard. All my films have been about taboos. I see myself as a bit of a maverick, on the edge of mainstream horror. All the interesting horror

movies have been done by mavericks and people outside the system.

"In America, the B-horror genre is generally controlled by people that are not trying to break new ground at all," Blyth complains. "They just want to repeat formula. You virtually have to fight your way into that system. At the moment, the independent companies which I would normally work for are dying out, and the majors are basically consolidating into huge conglomerates, so it's taken me a number of years to find the right project. That's why I waited to do this picture, because I realized from the *Horror Show* thing that there's no point in making films that you don't believe in just because you need a job. But I'm known there now and people are curious to see how this film will go. I think it will turn things around."

In the film, a young underground drug designer named Owen Urban (Andrew Stevens) is hired to do some secret blood research. Owen's boss, Dr. Alcore (Plummer), runs a posh clinic. "We changed the script to take into account all these wellness clinics where people check in for a week and go through a program," comments Stiliadis. "This is one of those clinics, but it's run by a bunch of vampires. Ten people check in but

(continued on page 54)

CARL J. SUKENICK'S
**MUTANT
MASSACRE**
THE
INVASION



COMING SOON

BLOOD

(continued from page 53)

only six check out." Dr. Alcore, along with his staff, has fallen victim to his own accidental creation, a viral blood disease that turns its victims into vampires. Owen's work is actually intended to find a cure. When his new girlfriend Paula (Heather Thomas) also becomes infected, he learns the secret to his peril and struggles to save them both.

Blyth passes over a preproduction publicity poster depicting a young woman lying wrapped in a gigantic American flag. A headline reads: "Her secret no longer hidden, her passion no longer safe, the addiction is eternal..." This, he says, "was one of the things that first attracted me to the film." He continues, "The story connected vampirism with a virus, and viruses are very much a part of our lives in the '90s. In a way, the whole vampire mythology, which involves kissing and biting and sucking, is dealing with oral sex, and that's how it's dealt with in the movie."

Red Blooded American Girl, a vampire film with no fangs, little gore and very few deaths, seems in line both with the young director's career goals and his vision of where the horror genre may be going. "Personally, I want to move away from the gore fest," he explains, "but not lose the outrageous characters, the fast pace, the strange angles and all the things that attracted me to the horror genre in the first place. Also, I've grown as a filmmaker and become more comfortable with actors, so that I don't have to hide behind special effects. You can get actors to show all sorts of things with their faces; fear, anger, violence, whatever, without huge amounts of prosthetics."

A few days later, on another location, the crew is filming a scene in Paula's kitchen. Andrew Stevens is everywhere; a notorious cutup, he keeps the crew and Thomas laughing. He himself is amused at the idea that he might become strongly associated with the horror genre. "Well, I did a picture last year," he quips, "called *The Terror Within*, which had a postapocalyptic alien underground. I was Sigourney Weaver, basically." Called to do a take, he delivers his line from out of the shot to Thomas' on-camera back: "I've been thinking a lot about what you said." No good. Another take. The shooting day is stretching out. Stevens grins: "I've been thinking a lot," he says, "about your but-tocks." 

RUBIN

(continued from page 27)

Photo: Copyright 1986 Warner Bros.



Well, we forgave Wes Craven for *Deadly Friend*, so it's time to let Bruce Joel Rubin off the hook, too.

showed the picture to a bunch of Wes' fans, who hated it. All they wanted were guts, so the studio told me to give them six more scenes, each bloodier than the last. We ended up having Anne Ramsey's head bashed in with a basketball. That really destroyed our love story, and everyone still blames me for the ending! That robot coming out of the girl's head belongs solely to Mark Tapin, and you don't tell the president of Warner Bros. that his idea stinks! But as far as the production went, *Deadly Friend* was one of the happiest experiences I've ever had on a film. I loved Wes, and he let me on the set and adopted my kids as production mascots. It also let me buy a house."

Rubin will undoubtedly be able to purchase more homes with the surprise popularity of *Ghost*, a genre-bending love story from beyond the grave. "Ghost's original concept involved a materialistic guy who doesn't believe in an afterlife, then suddenly discovers he's still around after he dies," Rubin details. "Now he has to figure out what to do with his new 'life,' and my cinematic ploy was solving his own murder. My biggest inspiration for that was the scene in *Hamlet* where the father's ghost comes back and says, 'Revenge my death.' I thought it would be neat to accommodate that idea into a society where spirits have been dismissed. But the one element of *Ghost* that I don't subscribe to is the dark spirits, which are my condescension to the Judeo-Christian ethic. The hellish nature of death should be more akin to Patrick Swayze's hallucinations after he's been shot. It's a state of bedlam and

confusion, where your ignorance about death overwhelms you. But people are still better able to grasp the idea of evil spirits."

Rubin looked at Jerry Zucker in a similarly dark light when told that *Airplane!*'s screwball co-director would be overseeing *Ghost*. "I immediately broke down crying, and told the studio that I couldn't accept their decision. This guy was going to kill my baby! So when I met with Jerry, I asked him not to mention one word about *Ghost*. Then we suddenly discovered we were on the same wavelength, especially with our Midwestern sensibilities. Jerry can really talk to the masses, and tap into their pulse by making them feel secure and comfortable. Though Adrian did a great job with *Jacob's Ladder*, Jerry was still a lot easier to work with."

With *Ghost* being filmed at the same time as *Jacob*, the writer had to decide which film would be better served by his involvement as associate producer. "I would have loved to have been more of a presence on both sets, but it became a matter of who needed me the most. Jerry was directing his first movie without his brother, and needed someone with experience to confirm that he was getting my vision right. And after going through *Jacob's* script with Adrian, it was obvious Adrian could handle the movie by himself."

Ghost might be the year's sleeper hit, but Rubin isn't worried about his writing's spiritual purity being corrupted by the offers that are now flooding in. "Success is a terrifying experience. But although it might have a disruptive effect on some people's lives, it's all very ephemeral to me. I've realized that no one stays on this planet for more than 100 years. *Ghost* has shown that Hollywood will let me make personal films, and that audiences will pay to see them. That's given me artistic freedom for a short time."

Though Rubin's first directorial effort, *My Life*, will be non-genre, his love for a world of demons, angels and supernatural machinery remains intense. "My favorite films are ones that speculate about reality, and say there are other planes of existence," Rubin concludes. "That expands our limited physical nature. But what's been lacking now in the genre is modesty, integrity and real emotion. You've got to sit around the campfire and tell stories that you *feel*, not just think about. Many writers seem to be solely interested in the special effects. But with *Jacob's Ladder*, I'm trying to give viewers the best of both worlds." 

"It is truly a piece about growing up and of coming of age," adds Cohen. "And what Steve does incredibly well is to tap into something that many of us in our 30s and 40s feel, which is that somewhere underneath all our grown-upness we're still adolescents in a way."

Sounds good, Larry. But what inquiring Fangorians really want to know is whether he had to cut much gore out of the book.

"Well, a fair amount," Cohen admits, "but I think it's really a question of how Tommy will end up treating it on the screen. One of the problems dealing in television is that the standards and practices of TV are concerned about children in jeopardy, yet the nature of what this book is about is children in jeopardy—it's founded on that theme. So what I did was write it without too much in the way of editorial constraint."

When it comes to the actual blood and gore of *It*, makeup FX supervisor Bart Mixon is the man to talk to. As well as helping to develop the clown makeup that Tim Curry wears for the pivotal role of Pennywise, Mixon has been overseeing the creation of Pennywise's various incarnations, which include a werewolf, a mummy and a rotted corpse that's been sitting in a lake for a long, long time. The latter creep caused no small amount of hassle where the TV censors were concerned.

"That was our biggest problem," Mixon groans. "The network would read through it and say, 'Well, you can do this but you can't do this, and you gotta be careful with that.' So with this corpse they're saying, 'We don't want it like *American Werewolf in London*—we don't want any meat hanging off.' They're saying, '*Raiders of the Lost Ark*—that's OK. Dry. A dry corpse is good.' And Tommy's saying, 'Well, the corpse is in water, so regardless of what it looks like it's gonna be wet!' So instead of meat, we have mossy seaweedlike stuff hanging off of it."

Mixon and visual FX supervisor Gene Warren were joined on *It*'s FX chores by several of the same Fantasy II/Make-up FX Unlimited folks who worked on *Fright Night—Part 2*: Jim McLoughlin, Aaron Sims, Brent Baker, Norman Cabrera and Joey Orosco. Jo-Anne Smith, Sally Ray and J.C. Matalon also got their licks in on the project, which is Mixon's first major undertaking since his year-and-a-half stint as Rick Baker's shop foreman on the

massive *Gremlins 2*. One movie that Mixon wishes he *had* been able to do more substantial FX work on was *Pet Semetary*, which he was briefly involved with when Fantasy II did the optical FX.

"I would have liked to have done the *whole* thing," sighs Mixon, "'cause I really like the book. But I was a little disappointed by what they did with it as a movie. There's this ludicrous bit in there when the guy's carrying the kid up the hill, and he looks back and this *something* comes rising up at him. Well, in the original story and in the script it was supposed to be a demon head. So me and Joey Orosco—who sculpted the spider for *It*—came up with a really nice pentagram-shaped demon. And then the director says, 'No, no—Fred Gwynne is a lot scarier; let's have *his* head lunging up.' And I'm saying, 'Why?'"

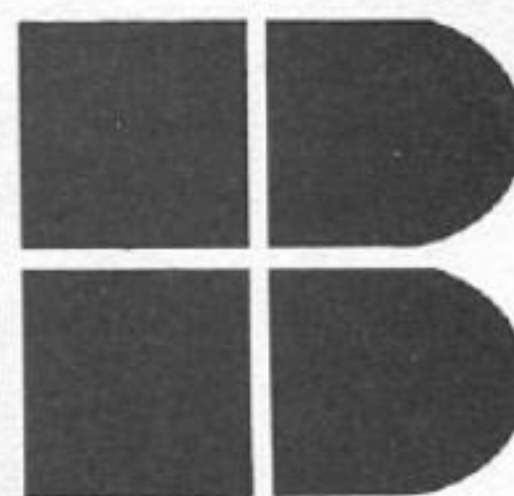
While he may have missed his calling on *Pet Semetary*, Mixon has much more riding on this latest King project. One of the things he's hoping will pay off visually in *It* is the above-mentioned spider monster. It doesn't show up in that guise until the end, but is actually responsible for dirty deeds throughout.

"It can be anything," explains Mixon. "It senses your fears, and it's always changing, so at the end when you finally see it in its truest form, it's a huge spider. But we didn't want people thinking, 'Oh, it's just a big spider!' so the first thing I wanted to do was make it real fleshy. Basically, spiders just have the exoskeleton, but what if you put meat on top of that? So instead of looking hard, it's got folds and muscles all over it."

Mold-maker Brent Baker is the lucky guy who gets to crawl inside the 12-foot-long mockup, whose 15-foot legs would make *Arachnophobia*'s Big Bob scurry for cover. The creature is radio-controlled, with mechanics installed by Dave Kindlon, and has servo-controlled arm extensions that the puppeteer inside operates. Fantasy II's Pete Kleinow, who did the full-figure stop-motion robot work for *The Terminator*, will do the animation for the scenes where the creature really has fun.

As Mixon and his crew roll the main body of the spider over to its lair on a heavy-duty steel roller, one wonders what it is the characters in the movie have to do to kill the monstrous thing. Mixon reminds Fango that it's the combined faith of the characters that finally rubs it out. And ripping its vile, eternally evil heart out with their bare hands wouldn't hurt either.

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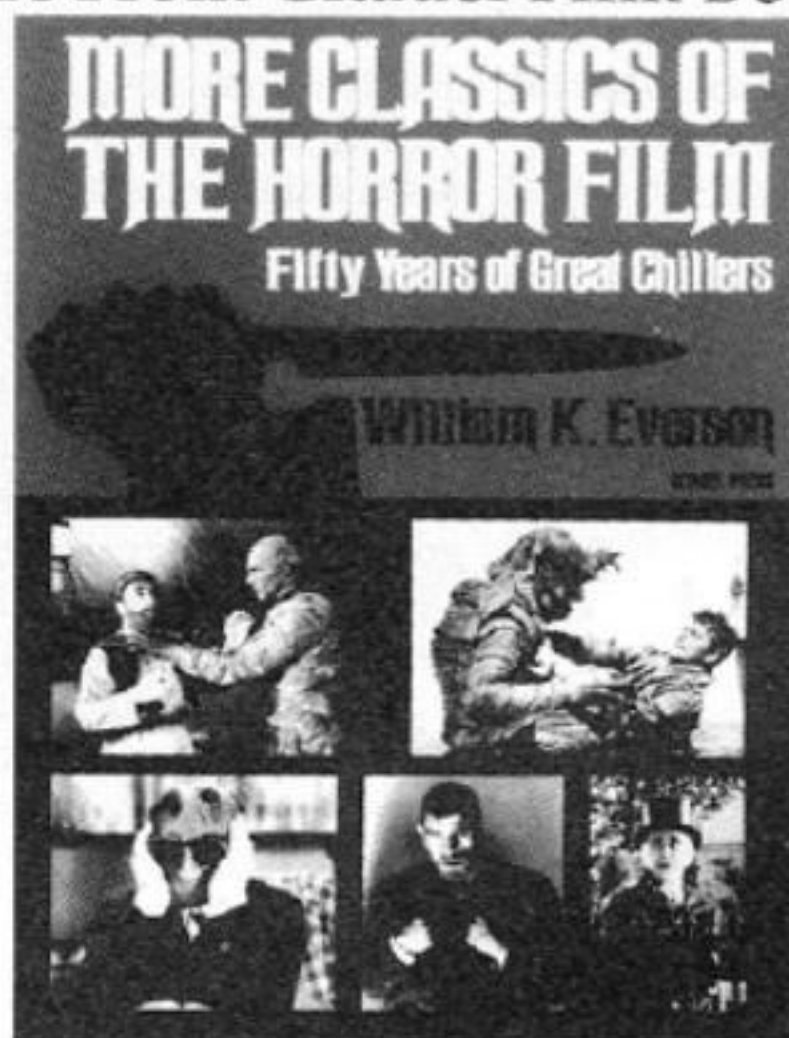
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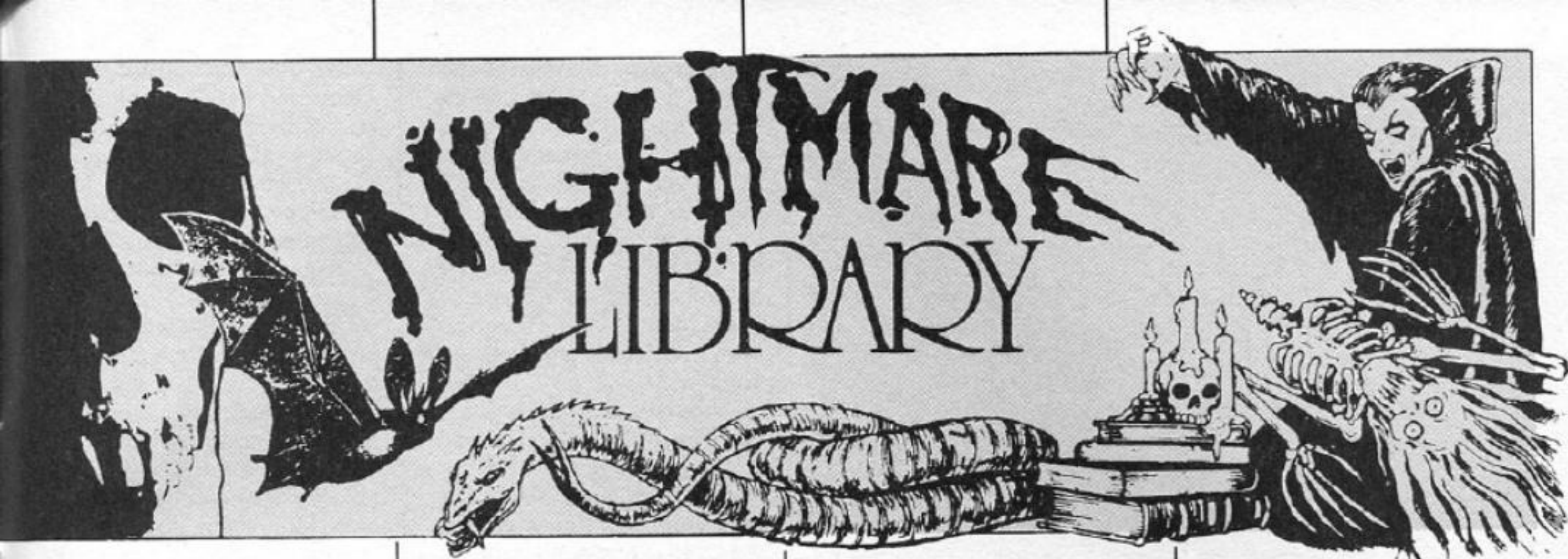
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Four Past Midnight
By Stephen King
Viking
800 pp, \$22.95

Four Past Midnight is King's latest collection of four brand-new horror novellas. The (loose) common thread is time: how it passes, how it ends and how it catches up with you. Each story is prefaced with a short explanation of how it came into being, allowing us a tantalizing peek into the workings of the Master's little gray cells.

Opening the collection with a bang, "The Langoliers" is one of King's all-time best. Ten passengers on a cross-country flight awaken to find that everyone else on the plane and in the cities below has disappeared. They try to puzzle out this mystery and get back on terra firma, but of course they land in Maine—where no one is ever safe in a King story. The tension starts immediately and builds relentlessly; I literally

could not turn the pages fast enough. The postapocalyptic quality makes this feel like a mini-*Stand*, and King's Theory of Time and Space is one you will never, ever forget.

"Secret Window, Secret Garden" is a story of strange coincidences through which a successful writer is accused of plagiarism. Now, I happen to greatly admire King's nightmares about writing; I feel they make a real case for writing what you know. This story, however, is little more than a rehashing of *The Dark Half*. True, it's a more psychological angle, but it neither adds anything new, nor terrifies like its predecessor. Next, "The Library Policeman" takes its hero back to the familiar hell of childhood when he checks out some books from the ghost of an evil librarian. It's a sad and sometimes nasty tale about coming to grips with old fears. King draws an analogy between alcoholism and childhood trauma, then suggests a model for recovery that trivializes the issue with a silly 1950s SF monster and solution. Finally, "The Sun Dog" returns us to Castle Rock, where a boy receives a camera that only produces pictures of a menacing mutt that gets closer with each shot. You can guess the rest.

Starting to sound a little like *The Twilight Zone*? A few of the characters themselves mention the resemblance, which unfortunately applies right down to the often one-dimensional, predictable plots. "The Langoliers," however, is worth the price of admission.

—Linda Marotta

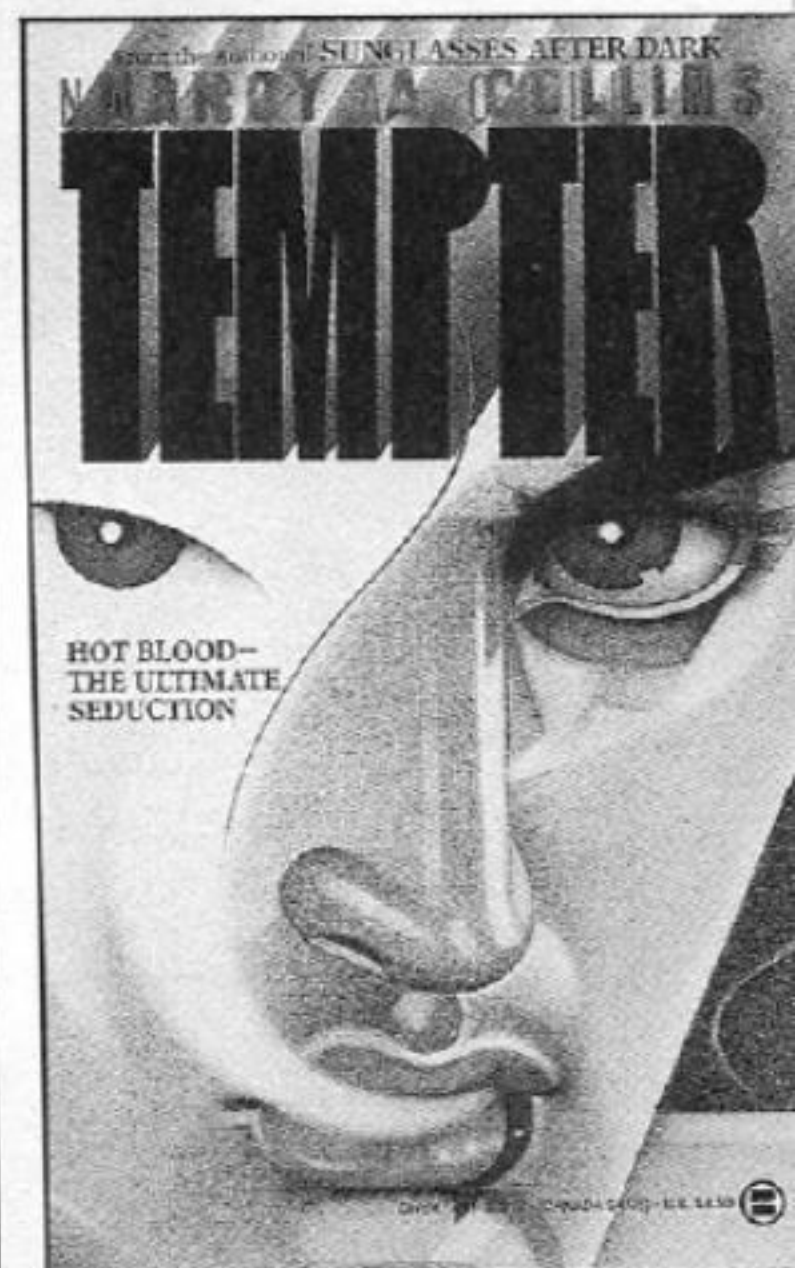
Tempter
By Nancy A. Collins
Onyx Books
300 pp, \$4.50

Nancy (*Sunglasses After Dark*) Collins is up to her old, new-horror tricks with her second novel, *Tempter*. Set in and around New Orleans (Collins' home), the novel is almost a blueprint for the new horror aesthetic: Fast, cinematic pacing; hip and violent to the max; and laden with sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll.

Adam Rossiter is a former rock 'n' roll prodigy. A star while still in high school in the late 1960s, Rossiter bottomed out soon after (Rossiter's idol, Jim Morrison, is a Collins favorite), and the past two decades have been a magical mystery tour in search of the self. He thinks he's finally found the answers after a voodoo initiation rite. But Rossiter is in for more than he's bargained for: The secrets of voodoo have unlocked a door for Rossiter that was meant to stay shut.

Tempter is a grab bag of horrors; a good subtitle might be "The Witch Doctor vs. the Vampire." Collins includes a forbidden book; a secret family diary (which takes up too much space in the novel); and a spirit that only Rossiter sees. Collins plays fast and loose with all these elements (particularly the vampiric—lightbulbs bother them!), and at times the novel reads like an amalgamation of grade B terror flicks (another new-horror element).

But, as with *Sunglasses After Dark*, Collins also opens our eyes to new frontiers in horror (and this does not refer to the 51st way to bleed



your lover). When she writes about vampire sex, you want to stop and jot it down. It makes sense. More importantly, it's something you haven't read before.

Indeed, this is new horror.
—David Kuehls

Makoto
By Kelley Wilde
Tor Books
288 pp, \$16.95

There is something about Japanese horror. It just mesmerizes you with its style and terrible beauty as it crawls down your throat before you have a chance to scream. It makes you feel like an accomplice. In *Makoto*, Kelley Wilde blends the discipline of Japan, neat as a kendo flip, with the rage of New York City as reflected in a samurai's sword. It's intelligent fiction...but with a monster.

MAKOTO



KELLEY WILDE

"Makoto is enthralling. Kelley Wilde has a flair for horrific showmanship and an instinct for the jugular that rivals the best writers of the genre."
—John Ferris, author of *Son of the Endless Night*

The story opens in Japan with a powerfully erotic scene between young Motoko and her adored older brother, a soldier in Mishima's private army. Under the pretense of acting out a ghost story, he commits *seppuku* and dies, begging her to behead him. Now here's a storyteller with a talent for *makoto*, which is Japanese for "going all the way." Years later, living in Queens, Motoko endures the singular terror of a foreigner trying to cope with "Noo Yawk." Robbed, dwarfed by the skyscrapers, tormented by crazy neighbors and confused by our ugly, illogical language ("Dey didden tayk-no foinuhjuh"), Mo has the additional burden of her crazy brother's ghost, which continues to punish her. (Nobody teases like a dead older brother.) But our heroine is determined to master the stinking subways and tongue-twisting vocabulary. Through her special combination of psychic exercises, martial arts and American funk, Motoko prepares to conquer the urban as well as supernatural threats.

One of Wilde's particular talents is getting inside his characters' heads. Whether it's a dream, a cocaine high or a slooow torture scene, his expert streams of consciousness and incredible sound effects put you right there. And on top of all this classy writing is as big, stinking, hairy, rude, horny, nasty and slob-



Author Kelley Wilde

bery a demon as you'd ever want to meet. Wilde's cynical first novel *The Suiting* may have won a Bram Stoker Award, but *Makoto*, as it wraps you in its silken spell, is infinitely more satisfying.

—Linda Marotta

October
By Al Sarrantonio
Bantam
256 pp, \$3.95

Sarrantonio's current novel is a disappointment, considering that his past novels, particularly *Moonbane*, have been unique and fast-paced.

Certainly, *October* does pick up about halfway through, but the story bogs down in incredibly long flashback passages. Two of the four main characters—Eileen Connel and James Weston—have much of their traumatic



pasts thrown to the reader in one or two lump sums. In the former case, the experience of a schoolgirl who will write a book called *A Season of Witches* is the very core of the novel, but through the very manner in which it is presented, when the true implications of the childhood scene are revealed, it seems contrived.

Connel has Alzheimer's disease, and recalls the past in a way she thinks of as a "Time Machine." Weston—an actor-turned-drifter with, yes, a secret—recalls his past with the aid of a memory "camera." There could have been a better way of presenting things. A prologue, maybe.

Sarrantonio's writing is still a cut above 90 percent of the writers working in the horror field today, and an early passage—the aforementioned childhood scene, a Halloween party—is captured with honesty. It's strongly reminiscent of Sarrantonio's fine story "Pumpkin Head" from a few years back.

Other characters include mock devil worshippers, juvenile delinquents, expendable relatives who pop up with convenient unexpectedness, and enough innocent bystanders to allow the ending to be as frenetic as possible.

Unfortunately, the last pages end up as a cross between King's *Carrie* and any number of TV anthology shows where the up-to-now omnipotent monster is dispatched in all of one paragraph.

—Wayne Allen Sallee

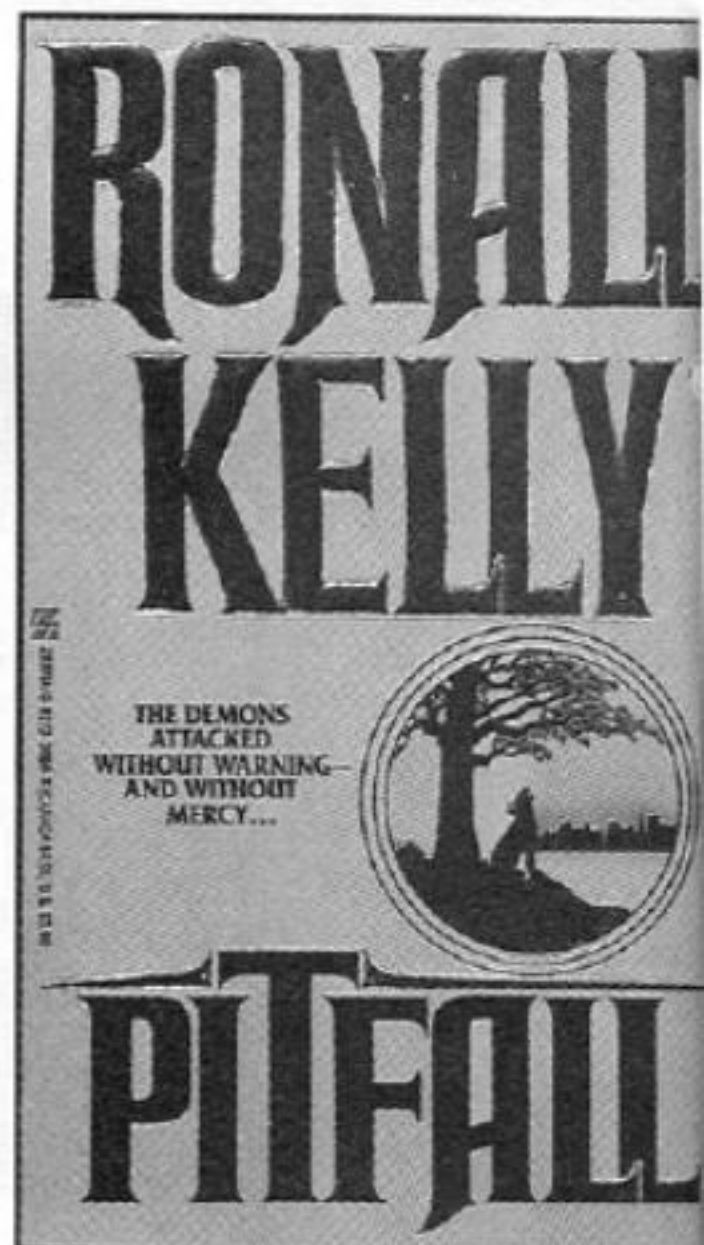
Pitfall
By Ronald Kelly
Zebra Books
320 pp, \$3.95

Let's see. We've had attacks from birds, rats, monster ants, slugs, vampire bats, giant worms, Dobermans, spiders, killer bees—even ambulatory plants (remember *The Day of the Triffids*?)

With *Pitfall*, Ronald (Hindsight) Kelly adds one more chapter to the canon, this one concerning Tasmanian devils. Except that they're not *real* Tasmanian devils, but a mixture of the real and the mythic. In other

words, they're four times as mean and five times as strong as the furry creatures from *Down Under*. And they've come to the west Texas town of Sulphur Springs to have a human picnic.

Kelly has fashioned a good paean to the old B-horror movies. *Pitfall* builds nicely for about three-quarters of the novel as the fighting "pit devils" are imported from Mexico and then let loose on the unsuspecting townsfolk. You've got your good-for-nothing sheriff; a couple of rednecks; a few children and their tough mother; a wise old Indian; and a reluctant hero. Plus, plenty



of torn-out fingers, guts, throats and hearts once the pit devils get ahold of them.

But to tie all this together, Kelly links the pit devils with a preposterous prophecy. And throughout the novel, the reader encounters word-heavy sentences like this one: "For a moment, she believed that she had succeeded in subduing the panic, that she had escaped the debilitating clutch of mounting hysteria."

Zebra Books has upgraded the "look" of its horror line. *Pitfall*'s cover is certainly pick-me-up attractive. But it's not accurate. The title and a quick glance at the cover made this reviewer think it was a Ken Follett-type adventure novel, rather than a horror tome.

—David Kuehls

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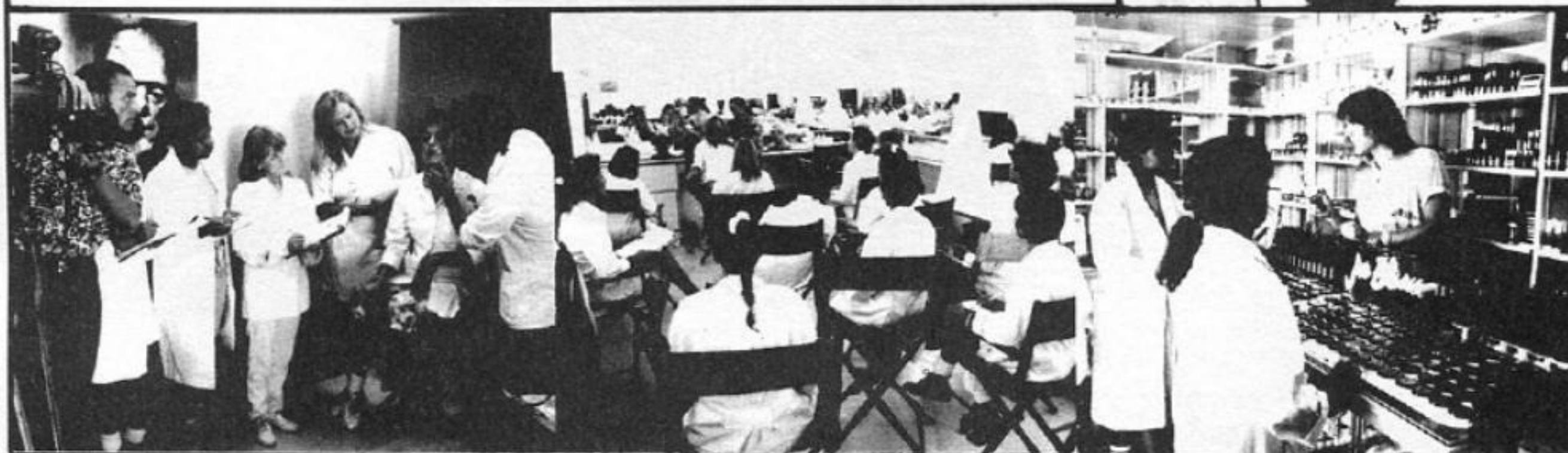
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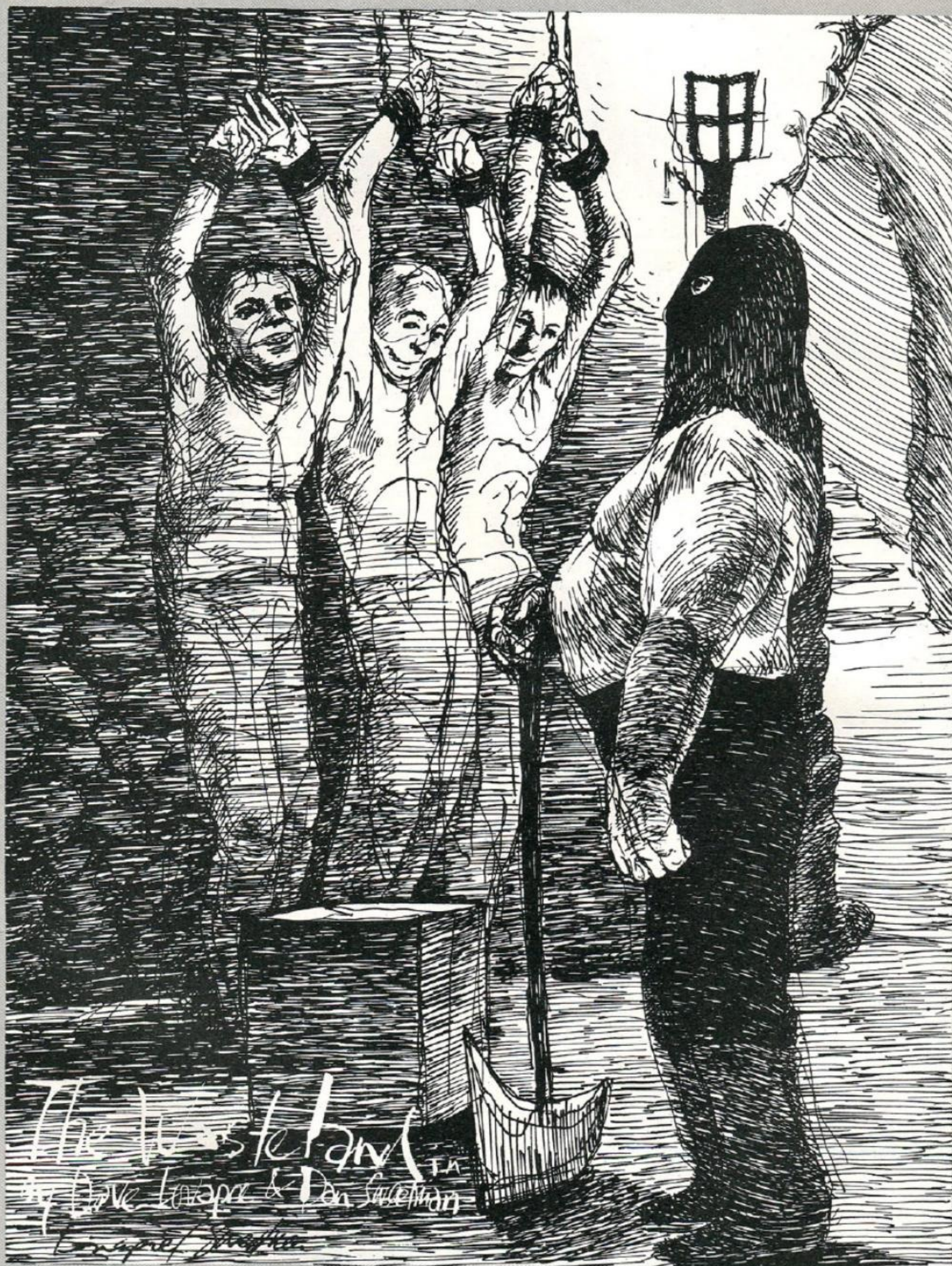
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SAVINI

(continued from page 31)

tance from the producers at the time. They wanted someone else, and I had to go along with them. But, by the "Family Reunion" episode of *Darkside*, I finally got my way and she was the best. Patty is a super actress and stuntperson. She's physical and vulnerable, pretty and tough. There was no other choice for Barbara.

Fang: How has it been working with Romero (who wrote the script and is executive producer)?

Savini: George is great; he's saying that it's my movie. He told me to use the script as a guide and do with it what I want. He said, "I won't tell you what to do, but if you have any questions, I'll give you my opinion honestly." But, then again, I take that opinion as the word of God, as words from Daddy—we jokingly call him Dad sometimes. There are others, too—Jack Russo, Russ Streiner and Chris Romero—and they're out here often, giving me suggestions. But basically, George has given me free rein. He may come in and say, "I think your pace will improve if you do this," or "I think you might need this shot or that shot," as far as coverage goes. He was worried about coverage in the cemetery, so I took his advice.

Overall, it's been an education for me. I came in thinking I had it by the ass, but I have learned that perhaps I need more help in certain areas than I thought I did. Now my attitude is, if I don't know something, it's somebody else's job. If I'm not on top of the continuity or the lighting, it's somebody else's job. And that makes it easier for me to just direct the movie.

Fang: What's in the future?

Savini: Who knows? That's the fun of it. I hope for more directing jobs, of course. If this movie is successful, I hope someone pops up and gives me a three-picture deal. Or maybe I'll go back to special effects if it's a failure. But that's the excitement of this business. You never know what's around the corner.

Fang: Do you have any pet projects?

Savini: I want to do a modern *The Most Dangerous Game*. I'd like to get Bruce Willis or Arnold Schwarzenegger to star, someone like that. It's in the public domain, so it could be done. *The Most Dangerous Game* is action/adventure, but it could be turned into a swashbuckling horror adventure on an island. A modern retelling with believable circumstances surrounding it. The boat wreck! The island! The guy who runs the island! It'd be great! 

BLAIR

(continued from page 22)

working hard. For someone who received star billing in her fourth movie, a major production for Warner Bros., to end up in films like some of those she has made must have been hard to accept. But she's kept her pride, and she has turned herself into an authentic, bankable star of these movies. They aren't art, and most aren't good, but she is not to be faulted.

She's a self-starting actress. "I'm known for having a button for every emotion—hit number three emotion, number four emotion. I like good directors, but I don't need direction per se. Nowadays, I usually don't have the time or luxury to block out the scene as I'd like. It's usually, 'The camera is going to be here, so can you do the master in this vicinity, and as quickly as you can?' So you have to adapt your work to the money and time frame."

She ran over a few of her horror films during our conversation, such as the wacko *The Chilling*, a dreadful mess co-starring Dan Haggerty. "I did not see the feature version," she admits. "I saw a 20-minute version that would be perfect for *Monsters*. We shot it in San Francisco, for a man who was trying to get involved in the film business. The minute I got there, I realized there were problems, which got worse and worse and worse. It was just a bad deal; I was stuck in the middle of a nightmare."

With *Grotesque*, she feels the original idea was worthwhile, though the title was not originally so exploitative. "But if I had sued them, it would have cost me more money than I got out of the project. They just loved the idea of 'Linda Blair in *Grotesque*!' " *Witchery* was an Italian film shot in English on location in Boston. "I did that because they told me David Hasselhoff was going to do it. He's an old friend of mine, and instead of calling him, because we were traveling, I thought of it as a chance to see him. But they played me against him—David did it because he was told I was going to be in it. We found that out when we got together on the set."

She has a cameo in *Zapped Again*, a movie she dislikes. "I do fine, I play a teacher for five minutes. My skirt blows up, but those are not my legs." She has also made two films for Chuck Vincent, a string of action-revenge thrillers, even the occasional comedy. "As I get older, comedy is so much more fun; it's an avenue I haven't had a lot of work in yet, and I hope I get more. We hope



The underrated actress does a quick and painless cameo in the upcoming schlocker *The Chilling*.

Repossessed is a good vehicle for it. If I had my druthers, if I could do anything I wanted, I would do the kind of projects Tracey Ullman is doing. And I'd love to do something like *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*."

And is *Repossessed* funny? Blair's response, given in a howl of laughter, is "Well, I laughed!" She does that more these days, and she's entitled. 

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48: King revisited; more *Fright Night* FX; Romero; *Supernaturals*' zombies; *Silver Bullet* werewolves; ultimate *Day of the Dead* pix. \$4.

49: Argento's *Creepers*; more *Silver Bullet* & *Howling II* werewolves; *Toxic Avenger*; *Nightmare on Elm St. 2*; *Fright Night*'s Chris Sarandon & FX; Bloch. \$4.

50: Special 50th issue! *Elm Street* sequel; *Re-Animator*'s bloody pix; Tim-pone interviews Angelo (Freaks) Rossitto; Savini as the Ripper. \$4.

51: Steve Miner on *House*; *Darkside* FX; *Critters*; *Psycho III*; *Living Dead* FX; mutants and aliens; Clive Barker; Craven; Mary Woronov. \$4.

52: John Carradine; *Demons*; Tony Perkins on *Psycho III*; Dennis Etchison; Savini; *FX*'s skeleton crew; *Elm Street 2*'s FX. \$4.

53: *The Hitcher*'s hell highway; *Transmutations* FX; the other *April Fool's Day*; Jack Harris on *The Blob*; Romero's *Living Dead* remembered; Jason poster. \$4.

54: *Poltergeist II*; *Maximum Overdrive*; *Creeps*; Ramsey Campbell; John Agar; *Critters* FX; Empire screenwriter; Freddie Francis. \$4.

55: Fly set preview; *Aliens*; *From Beyond*—first pix; *Psycho III*; Hooper on *Invaders from Mars* & *Chainsaw 2*; Buechler; Barker; Bates & Beswick. \$4.

56: *From Beyond* set visit; King on *Maximum Overdrive*; *Vamp*; Chris Lee; Savini on *Chainsaw 2*; *Aliens*; Winston; Craven's *Deadly Friend*; Cronenberg on *The Fly*. \$4.

57: Cronenberg's *The Fly*; *Texas Chainsaw 2* set visit; Craven on *Deadly Friend*; *F13—Part VI*; *Overdrive* & *Aliens* FX. \$4.

58: Chris Walas & the FX of *The Fly*; writing *Chainsaw 2*; David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*; Ken Foree on *Dawn & From Beyond*; Robert Englund on Freddy; King retires! \$4.

59: Stuart Gordon on *From Beyond*; *Darkside* preview; Thom Mathews (a.k.a. Tommy Jarvis) of *Jason Lives*; *Demons* FX; *Trick or Treat*; David Carradine. \$4.

60: *The Exorcist* remembered with Dick Smith, Linda Blair, William Blatty and others; *Scream Queens* Barbara (Re-Animator) Crampton, Linda (Terminator) Hamilton and Kristy (Deadly Friend) Swanson. Plus new *Little Shop of Horrors*. \$4.

61: Exclusive *Rawhead Rex* preview; Dick Smith, teacher; Jeffrey Combs on *Re-Animator* & *From Beyond*; Sam Arkoff recalls his AIP days & Michael Carreras relives Hammer; Dick Miller update; more Fly stuff. \$4.

62: *Nightmare on Elm St. 3*; *Evil Dead II*, special Friday the 13th salute; more Arkoff; Jason poster. \$4.

63: The unrated joys of *Evil Dead II*; the lovely Nancy of *Nightmare 3*; Alan Parker on *Angel Heart*; Italian zombies; the fall of Hammer. \$4.

64: Robert Englund's "Making *Nightmare 3*"; Raimi on *Evil Dead II*; NOTLD remake; *From Beyond* FX; Savini as The Creep; Skipp & Spector. \$4.

65: *Lost Boys* & *Predator* previews; *Nightmare 3* hero; Freddy poster; *Hellraiser* exclusive; Bruce ("Ash") Campbell. \$4.

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BACK ISSUES

66: Special makeup FX issue, with Kevin (Nightmare 3) Yagher, Rob Bottin on RoboCop, Hellraiser's Bob Keen and Greg Cannom's Lost Boys; the unseen Argento (rare pix!); Monster Squad. \$4.

67: Hellraiser; Lost Boys hero; Evil Dead FX; Cushing talks; Street Trash gore; Larry Cohen; The Believers; John Farris. \$6.

68: Jason actors, pt. 1; Rick Baker; slasher beach party; The Hidden; The Unholy; Lost Boys poster; Cohen 2; Pumpkinhead. \$4.

69: Jason actors 2 & Jason poster; Carpenter's Prince of Darkness; Brain Damage; Linnea Quigley; Stan Winston's Pumpkinhead; Running Man. \$5.

70: Werewolf; Pumpkinhead FX; F-13—The Series; Gunnar ("Leatherface") Hansen tells all; Living Dead II; Anne Rice. \$5.

71: NOTLD salute with REAL color pix! Uncle Bob on Brain Damage; Craven's Serpent & the Rainbow. \$5.

72: Censored Brain Damage scenes; Poltergeist III; Bad Dreams; NOTLD cast remembers; Maniac Cop; Howling. \$5.



73: Dead Heat; scream queen Jennifer Rubin; Englund's 976-EVIL; '50s monsters remembered; The Seventh Sign. \$5.

74: Exclusive Friday the 13th, Part VII interviews; the making of Beetlejuice; will there be a Re-Animator 2?; Hammer's Anthony Hinds; Michael Blehn; Critters 2; Bob Keen. \$5.

75: On set with Phantasm II and Monkey Shines; making Friday the 13th, Part VII; Traci Lords is Not of this Earth; Ghost Town; Hellbound: Hellraiser II; Child's Play; Hammer days. \$5.

76: Summer sequel spectacular: Hellraiser II, Phantasm II, Fright Night 2 and Nightmare on Elm Street 4; Return of The Blob; Steve Johnson FX; Romero interview; Fango con. \$5.

77: On set with Nightmare on Elm Street 4; Special Makeup FX issue; Tom Savini, the FX of Fright Night 2 and The Blob; Elvira, Mistress of the Dark; Halloween 4. \$5.

78: All aboard for Hellbound: Hellraiser II—in-depth Clive Barker interview; Nightmare 4 FX—exclusive photos!; Carpenter on They Live; bloody Waxwork; Blob FX; Dead Ringers. \$5.

79: On set with Halloween 4; Nightmare 4 FX—the Roach Motel; Chris Sarandon on Child's Play; Watchers movie; Cronenberg talks; Tony Perkins interview; Ken Russell on White Worm. \$5.

80: On set with The Fly II; Exclusive interviews with Duane (NOTLD) Jones and Donald Pleasence; I, Madman; Steve Miner's Warlock; Elvira poster; Hellraiser's Ashley Laurence; Cronenberg; F-13 TV. \$5.

81: Special issue: directing horror, with Chris (Fly II) Walas, Tom Burman, Sean (DeepStar Six) Cunningham and others; superbloody previews of Horror Show, Toxic Avenger II; on set with Pet Sematary, Monsters and Freddy's Nightmares. \$5.

82: Pinhead Doug Bradley speaks; Books of Blood comics; Return of Swamp Thing; Leviathan; Reggie (Salem's Lot) Naider; Fly II FX. \$5.

83: Special Friday the 13th issue—interviews with all the women, composer Harry Manfredini and producer Frank Mancuso Jr.; also Pet Sematary FX and Roger Corman talks! \$5.

84: More Friday the 13th; Steplather II; Ghostbusters II; new Tales from the Crypt; The Borrower; Michael Gough. \$5.

85: Incredible Jason & Freddy issue—set visits to Nightmare 5 & F13 VIII; Fay Wray; Document of the Dead; Corman. \$5.

86: More Freddy! Exclusive Jason Journal by Kane Hodder; Nightbreed set visit; Tom Savini in Heart-stopper; Fango con. \$5.



87: Englund as Phantom of the Opera; Halloween 5; King speaks; Barker speaks; weird Society. \$5.

88: Halloween salute—the Snaps interviewed! Texas Chainsaw 3 journal by Dave Schow; Craven's Shocker; MPAA; Phantom; scripting Nightmare 5. \$5.

89: Chainsaw 3 log; Donald Pleasence; Monsters; MPAA vs. video; Richard Matheson; Poe salute, including Romero & Argento's Two Evil Eyes. \$5.

90: Cronenberg on Nightbreed; Frankenhocker; Franco talks; Matheson; Freddy's Nightmares; Chainsaw 3; Joe R. Lansdale. \$5.

91: Clive Barker on Nightbreed; Bride of Re-Animator set visit; Basket Case 2 report; Friedkin's The Guardian; Tremors. \$5.

92: Nightbreed FX; violent Hardware; on set—Tales from the Darkside movie; Tobe Hooper's Spontaneous Combustion; more. \$5.

93: Joe Dante on Gremlins 2; Bride of Re-Animator zombie acting; On set: Class of 1999 and From Night III; sick puppets in The Feebles. \$5.

94: Exorcist III: Legion; horror actors Christopher Lee, Michael (Henry) Rooker, Tom (RoboCop 2) Noonan; Repossessed; Tales from the Crypt. \$5.

95: Summer FX issue: Gremlins 2, RoboCop 2, Bottin's Total Recall; Arachnophobia; Two Evil Eyes; Darkman; actor Brad (Exorcist III) Douit. \$5.

96: Raimi on Darkman; Frank Marshall on Arachnophobia; RoboCop 2's animation FX; On set: Maniac Cop 2; Dick Miller; The Boneyard. \$5.

97: Night of the Living Dead remake; On set: Child's Play 2; Fangoria Films' Mindwarp; The Gate II; King's Graveyard Shift; Eve of Destruction. \$5.

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Howdy folks, here's a true gore and computer freak that would like to correspond with people with my interests. Write: Patrick Sandstrom, Olsv. 3, S-905 90 Umea, Sweden.

Older female fan—Loves Victorian atmospheric horror and reanimated corpses—write! Patricia Barnwell, PO Box 134, Patton, PA 16668.

Young director looking for people with talent to make a movie. Any age and specialty, but good and willing to work. Write: Javier Chrem at Beruti 2576 (C.P. 1425), Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Censorship sucks! If you agree, let's trade uncut VHS videos. Paul White, 130-B Beverly St., Cambridge, Ontario, Canada N1R 3Z7.

Wanted: pen-pals into hard slaughter, gore, and slasher flicks. Peter McCormack, 6724 Trousdale Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

LA filmmakers! I'm a voice artist with tremendous demon/monster voices a la James Earl Jones, Mercedes McCambridge, and Michael Ironside. For the scariest, call Dan Holt (818) 243-2467.

CONTRIBUTORS' CRYPT

Larry Barsky plans on launching a video horror anthology for AIP. **Peter Bloch-Hansen** visited the *Gate II* set last issue. **David Kuehls** attended the Dearborn Fango show. **Rodney Labbe** wants to see more movies produced in Maine. **John Larsen** invites readers to join other Barnabas brethren by writing *Dark Shadows* Festival, PO Box 92, Maplewood, NJ 07040-0092. **Linda Marotta** can't wait to read the next Anne Rice novel. **Steve Newton** previews *Xtro II* in GOREZONE #16. **Robert Pegg** interviews Jack (*Eraserhead*) Nance in a future STARLOG. **Wayne Allen Sallee's** first novel will be published by Ziesing Books in 1991. **Daniel Schweiger** catalogs the latest horror comics, and **Harvey Solomon** discusses the *Swamp Thing* TV series, in FANGORIA HORROR SPECTACULAR #2, now on sale. **Marc Shapiro** spoke with Chris Walas for GOREZONE #16.

THINGS TO COME

We've only one issue left before the big #100, and what better theme for our penultimate installment than the man who's arguably horror's biggest name. Fango #99 will take a look at the explosion of films on the way from the mind of the great one, **Stephen King!**

To lead off, we'll have coverage of Rob Reiner's eagerly-awaited adaptation of *Misery*, which should be the scream event of this winter; included will be a talk with the **KNB EFX** guys, who discuss their most unsettling work yet. If that isn't scary enough, how about a former transvestite as a killer clown? *Rocky Horror's* **Tim Curry** will delve into his role as the red-nosed villain of the upcoming miniseries, *It*.

Elsewhere in the mag, we'll be digging up further info about the King-inspired rodent-terror opus *Graveyard Shift*. And, if we're lucky, next issue will feature the first news on *The Dark Half*, written and directed by King's favorite filmmaker, **George Romero!** Getting away from King, a set visit to *Predator 2* introduces the people behind the new alien stalkers, with a special peek at the creature FX.

There'll also be the news, reviews and previews you know and love. Join us to bid adieu to double digits with **FANGORIA #99!**

ON SALE: NOVEMBER 13

SHIFT

(continued from page 37)

Cuisinart makes our picker look like a Tinkertoy!"

Graveyard Shift is the young actor's first real genre effort; his previous motion picture credits include *Cherry 2000*, with Melanie Griffith. "I've done mostly TV; *The Equalizer*, stuff like that. My best exposure came as a paid assassin in the miniseries *Blind Faith*. *Graveyard Shift* is the best of the lot. The end of this film is so over the top that it even freaks me out.

"I auditioned for the part in Los Angeles," he chuckles, "and then, just to guarantee that I got it, I Federal Expressed Stephen King a box full of rats! I guess it did the trick, 'cause here I am."

The mention of rats brings FANGORIA to the real drawing card of *Graveyard Shift*: rodents, and plenty of 'em. Dave Allsberry, resident animal trainer, is only too happy to provide us with a tour of the rat tent, a makeshift structure erected beside the Armory. All 225 rats are present and accounted for, but disappointingly, they refuse to comment on the production, deciding instead to sleep throughout the interview.

Allsberry offers to be their spokesperson. "These rats are as tame as can be. The one real danger is if you stick your finger in their cage. Otherwise, they're docile to the point of being downright friendly."

It is true; the rats are snoring away, oblivious to everyone and everything. It is hard to imagine them mustering up enough energy to yawn, let alone terrorize an entire mill. "Appearances can be deceiving," says Allsberry. "If I tried to put a rat on your shoulder, your instinct would be to shrink back."

Anytime a rat is onscreen in *Graveyard Shift*, its movements are carefully choreographed. Certain rats have been trained especially to execute specific actions. There's a retrieving rat (whose job it is to pick up objects), and several jumping rats for all those sudden scares. During the swarming sequences, the viewers will be cringing, but what they won't see are the wranglers off to one side, luring the rats with peanut butter, their favorite food.

Undoubtedly, the toughest thing for the rats to do is sit and observe activity in the mill. "We have a good bunch of animals here," says Allsberry, "but just try getting them to stop moving, even for a second. It's almost impossible. They're extremely inquisitive creatures. It

takes patience and plenty of peanut butter to get them to do what you want."

Arlene's absence among her peers is hardly inconspicuous. Though FANGORIA was promised a peek at *Graveyard Shift's* elusive star, her creator, FX wiz Gordon Smith, later nixes that idea. "Arlene's being temperamental today," proclaims still photographer Toris Von Wolfe. "I was hoping to get a few pictures, but she's spitting up blood and generally having one hell of a fit." No amount of cajoling can convince Arlene to leave her trailer.

When audiences get to lay eyes on Arlene, it will be in that subcellar where the characters find themselves at the end of the story. The set is a convoluted wonder, and Gary Wissner can be credited for its unique design. "I wanted to create an underground environment, a really creepy kind of world," he notes. "There's a steady color transition down here, going from gray to black and white. Except for the blood, of course. That's very red."

The behind-the-scenes talent on *Graveyard Shift* reads like a virtual who's who of Hollywood. Wissner's many credits encompass art directing chores on *Another 48 HRS.*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *The Abyss*. There's also visual consultant Harold Michelson, veteran of *The Birds*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* and *Dick Tracy* (Michelson, by the way, wound up taking King's movie cameo when the author bowed out); Albert Whitlock, expert at matte paintings; and aforementioned FX master Smith.

Writer John Esposito lauds the crew. "I've been extremely pleased with what Ralph and his people have accomplished with my script. We've made some adjustments—mostly cutting down on what our budget just can't handle. I'd originally thrown in a lot of supernatural elements that proved superfluous. Now, it's about two-thirds reality and one-third supernatural. The climax is firmly planted in horror territory. It's legitimately scary.

"Please let your readers know that *Graveyard Shift* won't be dilly-dallying around the horror issue," Esposito concludes. "I hate reading comments in FANGORIA from producers who call their films 'psychological dramas,' when everyone knows they're still horror movies. I only hope that *Graveyard Shift* lives up to the expectations that the words 'horror film' hold. Although it would be fantastic for us to make a ton of money at the box office, the scare factor will be the true test of our success."



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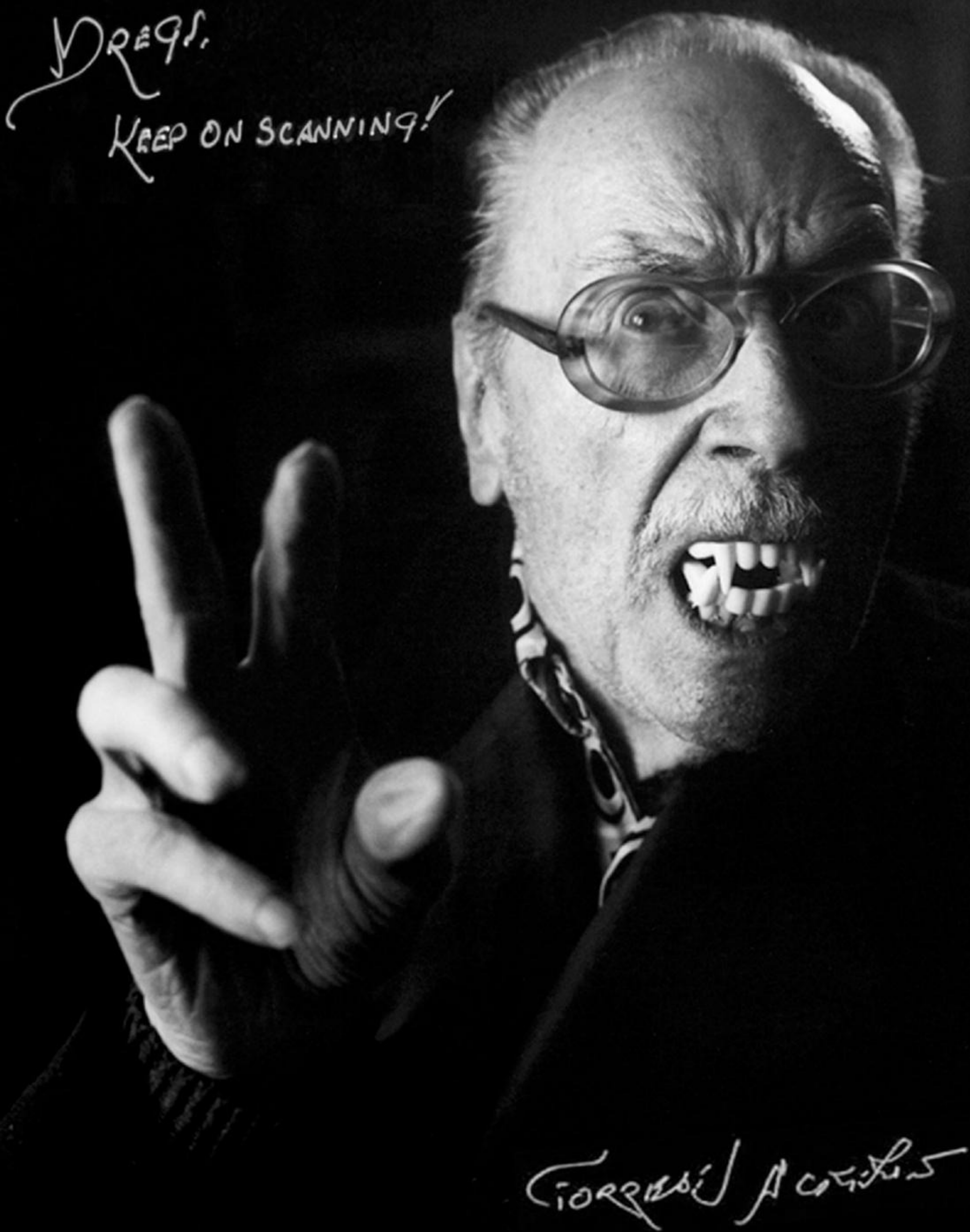
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